



Restoring Relations

Community Advisory Board (CAB) Minutes of 6/11/18 meeting

Attendance, Minutes, etc.

Members present: Mattie Dubé, June Bascom, Judy Brassard, Connie Weems, Ashley Hill (left early), Tony Facos, Evan Meenan (arrived late)

Absent: Sue Allen, Cindy Senning, Steve Reynes, Bill Jennings

Staff: Yvonne Byrd, Judy Gibson - Absent: Pat Hoffman

Guest: Jody Emerson

Introductions were made; minutes from last meeting were approved; agenda was re-ordered so that Ashley could present first since she had to leave early.

City Council Goals and CJC

Ashley briefly described the recent City Council's facilitated Strategic Planning process and identified these Council goals and areas of particular interest to her that she believe the CJC may be helpful in implementing

- Possibility of a renters' bill of rights with a call for mediating a wide range of landlord-tenant issues
- Reworking of ordinances and inserting RJ responses, where appropriate
Yvonne reported that there have been mostly good outcomes for use of RJ in response to dog ordinance violations. Ashley talked about civil disobedience arrestees being referred to CJC.
- Community education and dialogue that encourages and develops capacity for respectful speech and dissent.
Tony pointed out the importance of such work as critical to building a community culture that is not conducive to the build up of negativity that can ultimately lead to incidents of extreme violence. Ashley thinks the CJC can be a voice for encouraging civility – something she has seen a particular need for, both as a Councilor and a Deputy State's Attorney
- How the City deals with issue of discouraging or banning use of plastic bags.

Maybe CJC can help set up respectful conversation that also ensure the concerns of all populations are adequately represented.

- The impact of the closure of M&M Beverage on the city. This could take the form of a conversation about wealth and power, social justice.

Yvonne suggested the CJC may also have a role in supporting the Council's interest in proactively addressing drug use in Montpelier. Ashley stressed that Montpelier doesn't think it has a problem, so we need to educate.

Tony talked a little about Safe Catch. Yv brought up that some of the less obviously connected community organizations, like the Family Center and housing providers, need to be part of the drug use conversation. Tony talked about "Project Vision" in Rutland as a good model—expand the circle of people involved; meet once a week; look at what data says works. July 10 at Barre Opera House there is a big gathering planned—Community Drug Forum. Found when they did the raids last week that many were stockpiling firearms to sell to drug dealers. Yv talked about the "collateral damage" of children etc. Must reduce demand. How do we let addicts know that they are welcome to seek treatment here but not bring drugs here or throw needles around. Change the messaging. Role of CJC would be to convene? Leveraging the power of community? People want to be helpful—maybe some volunteers want to work with other parts of community to address drug problem.

Yv will talk with Ashley and strategize about how the CJC might be helpful with this issue and report on it at the next meeting.

Judy B. talked about what she did in the past as a social worker that worked as a preventive model. Weekly meetings, no worry about releases, etc. Many roadblocks to effective prevention work.

Evan suggested framing the issue by naming the problems to be addressed, e.g. What can we do to make Montplier more conducive to drug treatment?

Local Schools and Restorative Practices (RP)

Jody Emerson, assistant principal at U32, shared what is happening with RP at her school and the County-wide effort to support RP in schools. Every U32 teacher has been trained in basic restorative practices and there is an expectation that all teachers proactively build community using RP. All teachers can also facilitate reactively to situations. Three trainers in the building keep new people trained. Sports teams' issues have been resolved successfully using RP.

When students are suspended per school policies, restorative conferences are used to navigate a productive reentry.

Jody and Yvonne both talked about the RP in Schools in Washington County group. A growing number of staff from schools across the county have been meeting monthly to support one another's learning and use of RP. U32's new handbook will stress the restorative response to conflict. Ali Kuhlman, social worker at Main Street Middle Schools started the RJ in Schools group. She and others at MSMS are working at growing the use of RP at their school.

CAB Membership

Tony asked if anyone had followed through to talk with Travis Morris about the possibility of becoming a CAB member, as Rowly had suggested. Tony emphasized he would be a good addition. He is a former police officer and army officer and a Norwich professor. Knows cutting-edge crime prevention strategy. Yv will again ask Rowly to reach out to him.

Jody accepted the invitation to join the CAB. She lives in Duxbury, so that widens the CAB representation for that area of the county.

Yvonne suggested we ask a current COSA volunteer, Sarika Tandon, whether she might be interested in joining the CAB. She is an activist for justice issues, with a focus on racial environmental justice. Yvonne will invite her to come to the September meeting.

There was agreement that we need to need to have a strong CAB for when Yv retires (date TBD) and as Tony is retiring in April 2020.

Next meeting

September 4, 2018, 5 – 7 pm.