

Youth Commission
Wednesday, May 4, 2022
BCAP Office, 645 Penn St
6:00 pm

Members Present – S. Segura, G. Arias, R. Flores, B. Gonzalez

Others Present – S. Smith, J. Zabala, C. Crespo, W. Butler, S. Simmons, S. Bridges, C. Antonio

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting began at 6:11 pm.

All introduced themselves.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

PRESENTATION BY THE REAL DEAL 610

Ms. Simmons, Executive Director of The Real Deal 610, noted the need to advocate for one another and to support and guide one another. She expressed the belief that everyone should have the courage to express themselves. She noted the need to find out what people need. She stated that The Real Deal 610 does not get referrals from other agencies but does make referrals to others as needed. She noted the need to ensure people are comfortable asking for assistance.

Ms. Arias questioned the age group that The Real Deal 610 assists. Ms. Simmons stated that she helps anyone in need. There is no age limitation. Mr. Bridges stated that people don't need to have a referral to use The Real Deal 610's services. He stated that he attends many community events even when not invited to make contacts.

Ms. Simmons described a walk that the group took in the Gordon St area where they knocked on doors and started conversations to see what people needed. She stated that a town hall meeting was also held. She stated that this is hard work. She expressed the belief that the Youth Commission is in a position to be active in the community. She described the Blacktop kick-off event with a DJ

Tournament. She described a community walk around at dismissal time at RHS and questioned why the Youth Commission was not invited to participate.

Mr. Bridges stated that the Youth Commission would be a great partner for The Real Deal 610.

Ms. Simmons noted the youth attitude of live for today because there is no ambition or ability to see themselves in the future.

Mr. Bridges described his experience in prison for 20+ years. He stated that young people who come into prison are back with their friends and don't learn from the experience. He stated that many people don't understand the consequences of their actions until it's too late. He noted the need to learn from those who have been there. He expressed the belief that youth are looking for fast money and noted the need to be proactive in finding them work and described his ability to help with odd jobs and providing a meal.

Ms. Arias expressed the belief that students who know about scholarships are top students. Mr. Bridges agreed and expressed the belief that "bad kids" are also smart.

Mr. Bridges questioned if anyone is familiar with Pathstone. He stated that they have existed for many years and most people don't know about them. He stated that they have funds available for those re-entering society to get job training and education.

Ms. Simmons stated that Pathstone gets referrals from Juvenile Probation and Adult Probation. She expressed the belief that Pathstone should do more to advocate for youth. She noted the need for the Youth Commission to begin creating opportunities. She stated that the Commission has the ability to do anything.

Ms. Simmons stated that BCAP supports The Real Deal 610 and so far The Real Deal 610 has not been awarded any grant funding. She noted the problem with middle school students committing suicide.

Ms. Simmons encouraged Commission members to take advantage of this opportunity. She noted the need to be patient and open-minded as initiatives move forward. She noted the need to attract youth to events that interest them to

begin to gain their trust. She stated that asking questions and for assistance then becomes easier.

Mr. Butler questioned if the students at the dismissal event at RHS voiced concerns about school security. Ms. Simmons stated that they are very concerned about school security. Mr. Bridges agreed and stated that there are eight security guards for 1,500 students.

Ms. Simmons expressed the belief that the security guards agreed to do a job when they accepted the position and if they can't do the job, they should leave. She stated that if they stay on the job there should be an expectation that they execute their responsibilities. She noted that if they are experiencing issues with students the issues should be addressed with their superiors. She stated that students don't feel safe in school and this is unacceptable. She described a situation in which a teacher did not take action to address an unruly student because the teacher was afraid of that student. She noted the need for teachers to speak up as well.

Mr. Zabala questioned if The Real Deal 610 also works with parents and adults to connect them to services. Ms. Simmons stated that she works hard to prevent youth from having to decide between her assistance and their home life. She stated that she always respects parental boundaries and includes family when working with youth. She stated that she offers opportunities since many people are reluctant to accept help. She stated that there are many resources available that people don't know about.

Mr. Bridges left the meeting at this time.

Mr. Zabala questioned if The Real Deal 610 had any upcoming events. Ms. Simmons described two events in May that center around boxing and distributed a flyer. She invited Commission members to participate.

Ms. Simmons stated that The Real Deal 610 has a monthly BCTV program and invited the Commission to participate. She expressed the belief that this would give the Commission more public exposure.

Ms. Arias expressed the belief that Ms. Simmons is inspiring. She stated that the Commission needs guidance on how to navigate the needs that people have and how best to assist. Ms. Simmons noted the need for everyone to help one another.

Ms. Arias described the Commission's "Let's Keep Talking Tuesday" program. She stated that this is also a platform to share information. She stated that she would like to participate in the BCTV program. Ms. Simmons stated that she will introduce Ms. Arias and Ms. Arias should describe the work of the Commission and why she became involved. She stated that because of the size of the studio, only two Commissioners can participate.

Ms. Simmons suggested that the Commission contact Mr. Winters from Olivet to get involved there. She stated that Olivet has a Teen Writing Club and hosts Teen Takeovers. Mr. Crespo stated that the Teen Writing Club is inspiring.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Simmons for her work and for meeting with them. They noted that this meeting was inspiring. Ms. Simmons thanked the Commission for being willing to partner with The Real Deal 610. She expressed the belief that Commission members are brave for stepping forward and noted her hope that they continue their successes.

Ms. Simmons suggested meeting with Youth Commission reps on a monthly basis to keep communication open. Ms. Smith requested that Ms. Simmons share events with her so that she can share them with the full Commission.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Youth Commission will be held on Wednesday, June 1 at 6 pm in City Hall room 2-53.

The meeting adjourned at 7: 25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Smith, CMC
Deputy City Clerk