

*The best field trips are only for the older kids. They get to go rock climbing and biking, and the younger kids only go places like the beach and the Aquarium;

*Two boys said they don't like being excluded from the centers on girls' day, which takes place one night a week;

*More programs are needed. Not everyone likes computers and basketball. Volleyball, soccer and field games should be included;

*More people to come and play games with kids and help them with their homework;

*The Area Four Center needs pots and pans so they can do some cooking;

*New basketballs are needed;

*Area Four and West Cambridge need new pool tables; and

*Video games would be nice and might draw more kids.

Councillor Reeves then provided an overview of the purpose of the Committee. He explained that it is the City Council's job to help Cambridge kids develop the skills they need to be successful in the next century.

In response to a question from Vice Mayor Galluccio, several kids agreed that they do not like the present Saturday summer hours, because the centers are closed all day.

Sergei said that he likes the summer weekday hours because his summer camp ends at 4:00 p.m. and he can go home, get something to eat and then come back to the youth center.

Yasmeen said that most of the fun trips are for the older kids. The trips for younger kids are kind of plain. They went to the beach and the Aquarium. The older kids get to go rock climbing and biking. Everyone can go to the beach.

Councillor Reeves asked what happens on Girls' Day. Yasmeen said that it begins at 6:30 p.m. It is almost like a regular day, but the girls all come and they make ice cream sundaes.

Another girl said that at Area 4, the girls play games and talk in a group.

Councillor Reeves asked whether the kids would be interested in a course on manners which was apparently well received by the Girl Scouts. No interest was expressed.

Councillor Reeves asked how many kids are participating in the basketball leagues. About eight to ten raised their hands.

Councillor Reeves then asked why is every league directed toward basketball, and requested that the youth tell him what other sports they like and would participate in. Interest was expressed for soccer, kickball, modern dance and hip-hop, golf and rollerblading.

Committee members asked about tennis and rowing, but there was no experience of these sports within the group and no interest was expressed.

Councillor Reeves asked how many had been to other cities and where was the farthest from Cambridge that they had been. Alabama, Canada, Los Angeles, New York City, Haiti, Texas, Hampton Beach, France, Russia, Florida, North Carolina, Jamaica and Egypt were all mentioned.

Vice Mayor Galluccio asked how much help the kids get with homework at the centers. Mr. Goodwin asked how many do their homework at the Youth Centers. The majority raised their hands. Carlos said that some kids would like to play during the day and do their homework later at night.

Sanita said that most of her homework requires looking up stuff in dictionaries and encyclopedias. She does not know where to look in Area Four. There is only one computer on line, hooked up to the internet.

Mr. Goodwin stated that just recently, the system has been upgraded so that now all computers are on line.

Ms. Mehr, Director of the Area Four Youth Center, said that the computer room has to be staffed at all times and staff has to be trained on the computer. She does not have enough staff to keep the center safe all the time and still have the computer center open all the time.

Vice Mayor Galluccio asked the kids how the City can get their friends who are not involved to come to the centers. Why don't they come? The following reasons were mentioned:

- *Some are not allowed by the staff;

*There are not enough programs. Not everyone likes computers and basketball. They need more volleyball, soccer and field games;

*More people are needed to come and play games with the kids and help kids with their homework; and

*Some kids have other things to do.

In response to Sanita's comments about the need for pots and pans at Area Four, Mr. Goodwin asked if there had been a change in the last few months. Sanita said that there are still no pots but Kristen is trying to get money for outfits for their performance group, so, yes, the center has improved.

Councillor Reeves thanked all those present for their attendance.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

For the Committee,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Reeves", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves
Chair

City of Cambridge

The Human Services and Youth Committee held a public meeting on July 9, 1998, beginning at 5:45 p.m. at the Frisoli youth Center, Donnelly Field, Windsor Street for the purpose of hearing from pre-teen youths about current youth programs and programming needs.

Present at the hearing were Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves, Chair of the Committee, Vice Mayor Anthony D. Galluccio, Councillor Katherine Triantafillou, and City Clerk D. Margaret Drury. Also present were Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, Eileen Keegan, Division Head, Community and Youth, Department of Human Services (DHS), Robert Goodwin, Youth Program Manager, DHS, Andrew Spooner, Youth Program Director, DHS, Hawley Truax, Grants Manager, DHS, and Kristin Mehr, Director, Area Four Youth Center.

Councillor Triantafillou convened the hearing and explained the purpose. She requested that all present introduce themselves. Pre-teen youth present at the meeting included Yasmeen A. Ghoffar, Lincoln Street; Alanna B., Jackson Place; Nicquetta W., Franklin Street; Ronald Pierre, Norfolk Street; Joey Belgin, Winter Street; Sergey Kozin, Cambridge Street; Brandon Shelton, Second Street; Jose Carlos Silva, Cambridge Street; Sam Pina, Warren Street; Kairee Wright, Huron Avenue; Kristin Hinds, Fayette Street; Nadia Elysse, Corcoran Park; Pierre Julien, Prospect Street; Stevens Desire, Corcoran park; Arleen Como, Cardinal Medeiros Avenue; and Sanita Tabar, Columbia Street.

Councillor Triantafillou requested that each youth say what they liked best at the youth center they attend. Four boys and two girls said they liked basketball best; two girls listed playing pool as their favorite activity; two boys like the computers best, one boy likes the youth program extra homework help; and a girl and a boy said they like the staff at the youth center the most.

Councillor Triantafillou then asked the kids what aspects of the youth centers they would like to see improved. The following items were mentioned:

- *The West Cambridge Center is too small;
- *It is taking too long to get a new West Cambridge Center;
- *The centers should not be closed on Saturdays during the summer;

A report from Councillor Reeves,
Chair of the Human Services and
Youth Committee for a meeting held
on July 9, 1998 for the purpose of
hearing from pre-teen youth about
current youth programs and programming
needs.

In City Council July 27, 1998

Report Accepted

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