

For the Frisoli Center the following activities were noted: basketball, game room with pool, bumper pool and table tennis. The kitchen is usually closed and no one goes to the computer room.

In response to a question from Councillor Reeves as to why they do not go to the computer room, the youth responded that kids do not know how to use the computers.

Ms. Herold said that the City is in the process of trying to upgrade the computer availability at the Gately Center.

Councillor Triantafillou asked why the girls liked ladies' day. The response was that the girls get to do things that they don't get to do when the boys are around like play basketball.

Councillor Reeves asked what could be added to the center. The responses included the following:

- *A new center is needed in West Cambridge.

- *Most kids in Cambridge, all they do is play basketball.

Councillor Reeves asked why this is so.

Councillor Davis noted that perhaps most of the kids at the Teen Center play basketball, but not necessarily most of the kids in Cambridge.

Chucky said that most teen centers have inside courts and the kids like to play on inside courts and don't have many opportunities to do so.

Councillor Davis asked what about jobs in the daytime.

Councillor Davis asked what activities besides basketball go on at the youth centers.

Chucky said that there are pool tournaments, ping pong, movies, sometimes a dance. There are lots of things to do besides basketball but that's the reason the older boys go. Girls go to sit around and talk with their friends.

Councillor Triantafillou asked about homework help. The kids explained that this is only for the younger kids, the homework time is during the pre-teen hours.

Councillor Reeves asked if they have speakers. A staff member stated that they had a financial planner as a speaker recently. There have been a wide variety of speakers including a speaker about sex for older kids, and an ex-convict who described what jail was like, and others.

Councillor Reeves asked how many kids would be in the audience. Mr. Grassi explained that staff handles speakers like a mandatory meeting. Attendance ranges from 16 to 40 kids.

Stan Rogers, Director of the West Cambridge Youth Center, stated that at West Cambridge they do a lot of outdoor activities; it is not just basketball. Since West Cambridge does not have great facilities, they try to get the kids out. He encouraged Committee members to come visit the centers to get a better perspective of what the day is like. For example, the older teens came to him with interest in a peer leadership group.

Councillor Davis asked whether the kids at the youth center use the Fresh Pond reservation at all. The kids responded that they like the basketball courts at Glacken Field.

Councillor Davis asked if there was any interest in golf. No one responded.

Councillor Reeves asked how many have played golf. Five kids raised their hands.

Councillor Triantafillou asked how many kids had been on any of the trips sponsored by the youth centers, and seven kids raised their hands. When asked to describe the trips, the kids mentioned the following: rollerskating in Saugus, camping, movies, skiing, Six Flags in New Jersey, Celtics and bike riding on the Cape Cod bike trail.

Vice Mayor Galluccio noted that when he was their age, he didn't want to leave Cambridge because he didn't want to leave his friends and miss what was going on. He asked the kids if they would go on more trips if there were more.

A staff member said that they do not have more trips because kids don't go on many trips, often because they do not want to leave their friends.

Stan Rogers stated that he tries to make the trips as educational as possible.

Joe Grassi stated that the overnight trips are very expensive. The overnight ski trip cost the kids \$75.00, even with a significant subsidy of the City.

Councillor Reeves asked what is very expensive about camping, if you have the equipment.

Stan Rogers said that he just went through the training at the Appalachian Mountain Club, so now he can use the equipment for free.

Councillor Triantafillou asked if there has been parental objection to overnight trips, and staff told here that there was not.

Councillor Triantafillou asked about dances, and was told by the kids that the Area Four Center is having one on Saturday, with an outside cookout first.

Councillor Davis asked about trips to colleges, and was told that there is one next week. They are going to UMass in Amherst.

Vice Mayor Galluccio noted that people in Cambridge often do not take advantage of opportunities like sailing and golf. He asked whether there are resources to focus on those activities, in each center, or could it be coordinated citywide. A staff member responded that it takes people who know about these activities to give them some input. He said that he didn't know that it would be easy to arrange for the kids to play golf.

Vice Mayor Galluccio asked about mentoring, would kids be interested in having one person, a willing student, as a mentor. About five kids raised their hands to express their interest.

Councillor Reeves asked if kids often go to different centers and was told no, not unless there is a special reason.

Councillor Reeves invited questions from the youth and the youth center staff. He was asked whether the Committee will be visiting the teen centers. Councillor Reeves stated that he does not want to go to organized visits; he just wants to drop by and be able to see what is going on.

Councillor Davis asked for opinions about city parks. Chucky said that there are more than enough parks. Other kids said that they would like to have a swimming pool in West Cambridge; it is the only neighborhood without one.

Councillor Davis asked about transportation issues. The staff said that they could use more vans. Chucky said that every teen center should have one.

Ms. Herold stated that Human Services is just acquiring a second van dedicated to youth centers. Renting busses is very expensive.

Councillor Davis asked if staff had information about public transportation such as the train to Singing Beach, the bus to Hyannis, public transportation to Revere Beach and other city beaches such as Carson.

Mr. Goodwin gave the example of Riverside park, which is the least expensive and closest amusement park and water park. It costs \$20.00 per person. The program subsidized at least half of the cost. If a bus is needed, it is another \$300.00 more. In general, there are monthly trips.

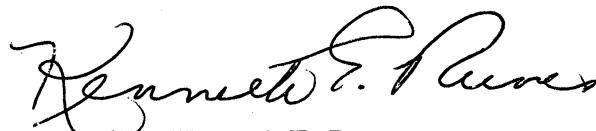
Stan Rogers said that they are involved in City Access, which offers free admission to all city museums.

Councillor Reeves said that the City could connect to Dance Umbrella and World Music to get some free tickets to these outstanding cultural events. He urged the Human Services Department to use the City Council for this type of connection.

The youth center staff asked for information about rowing. Councillor Davis stated that Ralph Boynton runs a company that rents kayaks and rowboats. He should be contacted. She said that Community Rowing is the place to go for shells. Councillor Davis stated that the City Council should work with the universities that own boathouses in Cambridge to try to get them to agree to provide some services to the youth centers.

Councillor Reeves thanked all those present for their attendance. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

For the Committee,


Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves
Chair

City of Cambridge

The Human Services and Youth Committee held a public meeting on July 14, 1998, beginning at 5:45 p.m. at the Gately Youth Center, M.E. Fitzgerald School, Rindge Avenue, for the purpose of hearing from teenage youth about current youth programs and program needs.

Present at the hearing were Councillor Kenneth E. Reeves, Chair of the Committee, Mayor Francis H. Duehay, Vice Mayor Anthony D. Galluccio, Councillor Henrietta Davis, Councillor Michael A. Sullivan, Councillor Timothy J. Toomey, Jr., Councillor Katherine Triantafillou, and City Clerk D. Margaret Drury. Also present were Jill Herold, Assistant City Manager for Human Services, Ellen Semonoff, Deputy Director, Department of Human Services (DHS), Joseph Grassi, Gately Youth Center, Robert Goodwin, Youth Program Manager, DHS, Andrew Spooner, Youth Program Director, DHS, and Stan Rogers, West Cambridge Youth Center Director.

Councillor Reeves convened the hearing and explained the purpose. He invited all those present to introduce themselves. He acknowledged the presence of Edward Sullivan, Middlesex County Clerk of Courts. Youth in attendance included the following persons: Michelle, age 17, Area Four Youth Center; Margaret, age 16, West Cambridge Youth Center; Wishonica, age 15, Area Four Youth Center; Violet, age 17, West Cambridge Youth Center; Rene, staff member of West Cambridge Youth Center; Pierre, staff member of Area Four Youth Center; Michael, age 15; David A.; Gabriele, Gately Youth Center; Consuelo, age 15, Gately Youth Center; Stephen; Stephanie, age 12, Gately Youth Center; and Chucky, age 18, Area Four Youth Center.

Councillor Reeves asked the kids to assume that they were City Councillors, responsible for providing the right services for teenagers. He asked Consuelo to describe what goes on at the Gately Youth Center. Consuelo said that the kids do their homework from 2:30p.m. to 3:10p.m., then they can watch television or play basketball or pool, or use the computer for homework. In response to a question, Consuelo said that there are two computers at the Gately Center.

Councillor Reeves asked how many kids use computers, and three raised their hands.

Councillor Reeves asked about the West Cambridge Center. The following activities were mentioned: playing cards, homework, computers, basketball and reading.

Committee Report #6 5445

A report from Councillor Reeves,
Chair of the Human Services and
Youth Committee for a meeting held
on July 14, 1998 for the purpose
of hearing from teenage youth about
current youth programs and program
needs.

In City Council July 27, 1998

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