

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TASK FORCE, IN REGULAR MEETING OF MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2024 AT 5:00 PM, MUNICIPAL CENTER I, HERITAGE ROOM 300, 50 E CIVIC CENTER DRIVE, GILBERT, ARIZONA

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Natosha Ash; Vice Chair Justin Fink; Members Owen Fermoye, Justin Fink, Lisa Ulibarri Hatlen, Deena LeBio, Maxwell Udall, Katy Walter; and Alternates Nneka Aguwamba, Isabelle Brice, and Courtney Salamon-Fejt

MEMBERS ABSENT: Members Marc Beasley, Bradyn Bredemann, and Angela Rogers; and Alternate Andrew Lewis

STAFF PRESENT: Staff Liaison/Volunteer and Community Resources Manager Melanie Dykstra, Council Liaison Kathy Tilque, Assistant Town Manager Dawn Prince, and Deputy Clerk Judy Martinez

ADVISORS PRESENT: Susan Cadena (Gilbert Public School District), Mark Huish (Chandler Unified School District), Dan Provonsha (American Leadership Academy), Community Engagement Officer Emily King, and Police Public Affairs Officer Levi Leyba (Gilbert Police Department)

OTHERS PRESENT: Facilitator Kathleen Dowler of Dignity Health

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Ash called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Fink led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Staff Liaison Dykstra called roll and declared a quorum present.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

None.

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Consider approval of the October 21, 2024 minutes

A MOTION was made by Chair Ash, seconded by Member Fermoye, to approve the minutes of October 21, 2024 meeting. *Motion carried 8-0.*

2. Review and discussion of priority area of Teen Violence – Compression Planning Session

Facilitator Dowler explained the process of compression planning and discussed the overall topic of teen violence and background. She said the overall purpose was to promote awareness, provide education, and identify resources with the goal to develop specific recommendations for the Town Council to consider. She asked the group to focus on the “what” and not on the “how”, asking the group to be succinct and listen with open minds and providing guidelines for focusing. She asked each group to work for 10 minutes to place ideas onto sticky notes before rotating between categories of Education, Awareness, and Resources. She reminded them that the goals should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant to the topic, and able to fit into the timeframes of short-term, mid-term, and long term.

After the exercise the group placed their sticky note ideas into the three categories and added colored dots on the sticky notes to prioritize the ideas. Facilitator Dowler then read the ideas and asked the person who generated the idea to expand on it for the group. The group agreed on the ideas that should move forward. There were approximately 111 ideas in total.

The following ideas were listed to be carried forward in three categories:

Education

- Add relevant education into school assemblies (short-term)
- Educate teens and adults on current ordinances, laws, and consequences (short-term)
- Educate businesses on trespassing and add property owner education (short-term)
- Educate community on what falls under each department’s purview (school vs. PD vs. courts) (short-term)
- Resources and education for parents and teachers to identify teen violence (broad approach) (short-term)
- Parenting classes in schools (short-term)
- Various classes of parent involvement with schools (violence, bullying, etc.), possibly at community centers (short term)

- Providing education on adding SROs to charter and private schools (mid-term)
- Town-sponsored scholarship for those who completed a teen violence course; could be certification with topics such as “how do you look out for your friends” (mid-term)
- Educate teens on how to identify dangerous situations, red flags, and how to de-escalate; would pair well with the assembly idea (mid-term)
- Mandate a program as a disciplinary consequence, partner with town and schools districts; requirement that the parent and student go through a program as a ticket back into school (also under Resources) (mid-term)
- Educate on the negative impacts, repercussions, and consequences on victims and those inflicting violence (mid-term)
- All-stakeholder surveys (not just for youth) include parents, teachers, community, police department, etc. – possibly tie to a modified needs assessment or add a new survey – ask the right questions (mid-term)
- Let schools do full surveys of kids (mid-term)
- Anti-violence school student ambassadors– schools do anti-violence campaigns or have an anti-violence council to get students more involved (long term)

Awareness

- Inform students of all ages (short-term)
- *Report, Don't Repost* posters on school campuses and consistent messaging (short-term)
- Set smart goal for reducing teen violence and determine how will it be measured (short-term)
- Update webpage frequently including surveys and information on what the town was offering – should be easy to find on Town website (short-term)
- More antiviolence campaign funding for schools (short-term)
- Expand on Police Department resources on youth education, brain development, and how to handle issues with youth (short-term)
- More parent engagement – parents not aware of what programs were offered (short-term)
- Showcase/highlight efforts of fighting teen violence at events (like Mesa Marathon...or “in honor of...”) (short-term)
- Stronger social media presence from Parks and Recreation (short-term)
- Parks and Recreation partner with schools and visit junior high campuses (short-term or mid-term)
- One platform to go instead of various (Parks and Rec, schools) (mid-term)
- Social media campaign for parents by parents - select one or two messages that are consistent with messaging – like McGruff - help normalize talking about topics (mid-term)

- Social media campaigns for teens/by teens (boundaries, define the problem, where to report, why report, bystander laws) (mid-term)
- Benefits of adding SROs to charter schools (mid-term)
- Awareness of counseling to families, youth, schools (mid-term)
- Student surveys in schools (safety, bullying) – emailed to parents (mid-term)
- Cross community efforts – different cities working together – noted that activities and crime both cross city boundaries (long-term)

Resources

- Events for youth that include free food – combining activity with food truck (short term)
- Troubled kids paired with Big Brothers/Big Sisters Program - who else can become a partner in the community? (short term)
- Parent volunteers to fill in educational goals (such as therapists) - volunteers using their own skill sets to help (short term)
- DARE Officer – expanding the Community Engagement Officer’s (CEO) role – growing CEO position or having an officer assigned to teen violence – and expanding key issues for officers, maybe in collaboration with the SROs (short term)
- Dedicated phone number and website for students and others to report incidents or define or streamline ways to report different types of incidents – or an app to help identify best way to report (like 311) (short term)
- Highlight what was already in place – such as parenting classes through crisis center or Parent University (short term)
- Town position or department focused on teens to collaborate with schools, town departments, and other groups (mid-term)
- SROs at all junior high campuses (mid-term)
- Referral to services pipeline – what is the pipeline and process for referrals for new mental health program (mid-term)
- Increase funding for programs (especially *Report, Don't Repost*) (mid-term)
- Safe space in schools (example – Black Hawk Haven at Williams Field) (mid-term)
- Mobile parks and recreation opportunities (have things for kids after football games) (mid-term)
- Expand Parks and Recreation and Boys and Girls Club services (mid-term)
- Education classes that schools can refer troubled youth to (suspended, must complete course) – also under Education (long-term)
- Peer and mentor program (long-term)
- Affordable mental health services for young people prior to arrest (long-term)
- Social media as resource to share information including Town ordinances, referral info, current events – people need to know where to go (long-term)

- Expand recreation center to be open at night - kids go to places like In-n-Out Burger after games because they have nowhere else to go (long-term)

Facilitator Dowler thanked the group for their wonderful ideas and discussed how the compression exercise would proceed at the next meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

None.

FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

Staff Liaison Dykstra spoke of the next meeting on December 9, 2024 and reminded the members to respond to her email to confirm attendance and notify her of any food allergies.

COMMUNICATIONS

Report from Council Liaison on current events.

Council Liaison Tilque noted there would be a groundbreaking for the Advocacy Center in January 2025. She congratulated the teen members of the Task Force on receiving a Gilbert Chamber of Commerce Excellence Award. She noted there was an ongoing East Valley Councilmember Luncheon; that group shared ideas and she would be sharing information from the Task Force.

Report from Staff Liaison on task force assignments and current events.

Staff Liaison Dykstra noted there would be lots of events and activities coming up, including the Gilbert Days event. She asked the group to review the ideas and priorities from current meeting to prepare for the final meeting in December and for the forthcoming Council Study Session; then encouraged the members to attend. Assistant Town Prince noted the recommendations to the Council would likely be made on December 17, 2024.

Report from Task Force Members on current events.

Vice Chair Fink asked for a list of what was in the Council's purview in terms of recommendations, noting that the Council could not require schools to follow the recommendations. Council Liaison Tilque noted that recommendations would still be forwarded to schools and other organizations.

ADJOURN

A MOTION was made by Chair Ash to adjourn the meeting. *Motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

ATTEST:

Melanie Dykstra, Staff Liaison

Natosha Ash, Chair