

Camp Harkness Advisory Committee
301 Great Neck Road
Waterford, CT 06385-3825
April 24, 2025
Minutes
Camp Harkness Office and Online via Teams

Present: Shannon Aiello, Stan Soby, Betsie Danforth, Bev Jackson, April Dipollina, Allison Van Etten, Elisa Marcaux, Jackson Pierre-Louis

Others Present: Ivana Chylinski, Eric Carrero, Jackie Staller, Lori Allen, Brian K. Smith, Mellisa Jessip

1. **Call to Order:** 10:33 AM
2. **Additions to Agenda:** Introduction of Mellisa as the new horticulture staff person
3. **Approval of Minutes:** April motioned to approve March 2025 minutes. Bev seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.
4. **Membership:** No update
5. **Camp Report:**
 - A. **Physical Plant:**
 - Continued to prepare Camp for summer season
 - B. **Camp Usage/ Events:**
 - Elisa gave the March report (see attached)
 - Cabin Users: 5 families
 - Residential Campers: 4
 - Day Visitors: 2214
 - Events included: Bingo Night, Sound Community Talent Show, Connecticut College Volunteers
 - Elisa and staff continue to focus on new hires
 - Finding Lifeguards is a major issue
 - Elisa met with Rocky Neck staff – proposed changes to individuals who are not certified as lifeguards were made
 - Camp meetings have occurred
 - Contracts are going in
 - Materials for Camp have been delivered and include sand, rocks, and mulch
 - The Business Office now has a bid for the playground
 - It is not official, but will probably be working with KOMPAN
 - March Job Fair had low attendance
6. **Foundation Report:**
 - April reported that there is a meeting on April 23rd
 - A schedule was set for monthly meetings to be held on the 4th Wednesday of each month
 - Train Show is scheduled for November 8th
 - Foundation received an \$80,000 grant from the Community Foundation for the Nature Trail

7. DDS:

- Brian reported that DDS has released a direct support staff job board
- A contractor is currently working on concepts for May 23rd IDD Day; the event will be from 10-3pm
- Pamphlets are to be mailed to every DDS individual or passholders
- The Governor has made a proclamation for this day to be a yearly event
- Rain date is May 28th
- Compiling a list of vendors for resources and activities
- The provider network will be made aware of this event
- Also contacting the State Department of Education to get the message out
- Allison shared that all school districts have developed the site CT Reap that posts open school positions
- Stan questioned what compensation would be made for the work people are being asked to do; will it be addressed in a meaningful way
- Brian couldn't directly answer; there were no concrete details but there is a discussion ongoing
- Allison shared that last year the Department of Education started to create a model para-education program for high school seniors
- She has not seen any results of the plan
- Jackson shared that there has been the development of a standardized training program to create a pool of competent staff

8. Advocacy:

- Stan encouraged everyone to contact legislators regarding the next steps in budget changes
- He suggested contacting them on a regular basis

9. New Business:

- Next meeting date was changed to May 23rd at 9am before IDD Day
- Betsie questioned progress on youth programs
- Discussion still centers around licensing and staffing for that age group.

10. Adjournment: 11:25 AM

Next Meeting: May 23, 2025, at 9:00am

Respectfully submitted by: Shannon Aiello, Secretary