

Island Parents Advisory Council / General Meeting

Meeting Minutes / YMCA, 6:30 p.m.

January 16, 2014

Organizers: Kim Leaird, Kate DeVane, Ann Marie Cywinski

Attendees who Signed In: Marit Bezahler – VH
Matthew Burke – MVRHS
Ken Schoenberg – Edgartown
Kathleen Schoenberg – Edgartown
Madeline Lopes – MVRHS
Alecia Barnes – Superintendent's office
Midge Jacobs – Superintendent's office
Alexandra Welch – Edgartown
Hope MacLeod – Superintendent's office
Merrick Carreiro – Oak Bluffs
Mary Yancey – Tisbury/VH
John Murray – Edgartown
Phil Campbell – Superintendent's office
Kris O'Brien – Oak Bluffs
Bill Giordano – Oak Bluffs
Rich Osnoss – MVRHS
Patricia Meyer – West Tisbury
Connie Berry – MVRHS
Betsi Luce – MVRHS
Penny Vaughn – Edgartown
Kara Merry – West Tisbury
Laura Silber – Edgartown
Lauren Major – Edgartown
Debra Gaines – MVRHS
Melissa Kagan – Charter

Press: Olivia Hull – MV Gazette

Please note: While the meeting took place on January 16, 2014, no official minutes are recorded as we were still not a functioning entity. These minutes are recalled as the organizer and as an attendee and backed up by the Gazette story that appeared on January 18, 2014 : <http://mvgazette.com/news/2014/01/18/special-needs-advisory-group-looks-more-active-future?k=vg525608dca845e>

I. Purpose

To revive the Island Parents Advisory Council on Special Education and to advise parents on their right to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs and on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities

Intent was to formally organize and elect/appoint officers so that we can move forward as a legal, functioning entity.

A flyer was developed and sent to the superintendent's office for dissemination to all island schools.

II. Meeting

Meeting began at 6:30 p.m.

Parents arrived, signed in, and were given a sheet to fill out that asked:

1. What is the issue most critical to you right now?
2. Are there topics you would like more information about? (For example, the IEP process, advocating more effectively for your child, afterschool programs and support, therapies, doctor resources, supports for hearing-impaired students)
3. Are you willing to serve on a committee?

As the one existing member of the dormant Island Parents Advisory Council on Special Education, Ann Marie Cywinski introduced herself and spoke of parent involvement being scarce over the years. She spoke of what a SEPAC is designed to do and what she had done in the past along with Kathi Hackett of Community Services.

Phil Campbell introduced himself to attendees for the first time since starting in his position on November 15, 2013, saying that he has only been on the job for "two months and one day." He added to the conversation about the IPAC's role with the school administration.

Kate DeVane spoke of organizing properly so that we could become an official entity again. A sign-up sheet was sent around the room for parents to sign if they were interested in serving on either the Executive Committee representing their school or in being an officer. We requested contact information.

Parents who signed sheet: Kristy Krall (Merrick Carreiro); Alexandra Welch; Laura Silber; John Murray; Penny Vaughn; Marit Bezahler; Kara Merry, Amy Houghton (husband), Connie Berry, Bill Engler (left no contact info)

Parents spoke about needing a support group and asked why we could not all meet like this and share stories instead of forming a committee. This is advisable, but we also need to have the formal structure of the IPAC in order to effect change within the school system

There was commentary about PAC meetings 6-7 years ago that were not effective.

Question was made about Charter School involvement.

We spoke about ability to amend bylaws.

How did we leave things? I can't recall!