

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF MEN

<http://www.nh.gov/csm>

Minutes for the 44th Commission Meeting

February 29, 2008 1-4 PM

Legislative Office Building Room 206, Concord, NH

These minutes were taken by Scott Garman.

Members Present: Joe Mastromarino, Larry Colby, Scott Garman, Mike Geanoulis.

Members Absent: Marshall Hickok, David Lauren, Scott Meyer.

Also Present: Dan Fairbanks, Keene.

The meeting opened with Commissioner introductions.

Commission Administrivia:

Scott Garman noted that it has been nearly six months since the terms of Commissioners Hickok and Lauren have expired, and requested that the Commission draft a letter to the Governor and Executive Council reminding them of the need to make appropriate nominations or renominations to the Commission. Mike Geanoulis motioned to have Joe Mastromarino compose and send this reminder letter as soon as possible. Larry Colby seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Mike Geanoulis requested that an agenda item be added regarding the printing of the report. Joe Mastromarino granted this addition.

Larry Colby distributed copies of a US News and World Report article: "Spanking Raises Chances of Risky, Deviant Sexual Behavior" by Amanda Gardner, 2008-02-28. The article summarizes new research from UNH professor Dr. Murray Straus of the Family Research Laboratory. This research found that in addition to other damaging effects of childhood spanking, risky sexual behaviors and masochism-related sexual deviances are also likely consequences of corporal punishment.

Domestic Violence:

Joe Mastromarino noted that discussion and voting on domestic violence related topics would be deferred until the next meeting. The Commission is looking forward to the opportunity to hear from both the NH Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence and Stop Abuse for Everyone, and learn the reasons why these groups have been unable to collaborate more closely given the importance of

their shared mission.

Secretary's Report:

Scott Garman distributed copies of the January 2008 meeting minutes. Joe Mastromarino noted one typo to correct. Mike Geanoulis motioned to accept the meeting minutes as presented (including typo fix). Larry Colby seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

Web Site Report:

Scott Garman noted that the Commission's web site now includes a downloadable PDF version of our second biennial report. Mike Geanoulis requested that some kind of search engine be added to the site to allow the public to more easily find topics discussed in our minutes and reports. Scott Garman agreed to look into this further.

Treasurer's Report:

In the absence of Treasurer David Lauren, the treasurer's report is delayed for a future meeting.

Mike Geanoulis has been in communication with Barry Bodell (Office of Administrative Services) to obtain reimbursement for Lee Newman's tri-fold pamphlet and flyer design. Joe Mastromarino agreed to submit the required statement to release the funds so this matter can be closed before the next meeting.

Second Biennial Report Printing:

Mike Geanoulis reported that he went forward to have our second biennial report printed at Kinko's. He ordered 100 copies of the report for general distribution. Mike then ordered another 35 copies of the report - 24 for the State Library (as required by law), and seven for the Office of Administrative Services, Governor, and Executive Council. These 35 additional copies were bound and printed using higher quality methods due to their importance. Mike distributed those 35 copies of the report, but also needs a cover letter from the Chair to send to those recipients as well. Joe Mastromarino agreed to write the cover letter and send it out immediately.

Mike Geanoulis paid for the printing of these reports using his personal credit card for a total of \$447.10, and is in the process of submitting the expense to Barry Bodell (Office of Administrative Services) for reimbursement from the Commission's Treasury.

Mike Geanoulis distributed a copy of the report to each Commissioner present, and also 10 copies to Larry Colby at his request for distribution at upcoming fatherhood conferences.

Fatherhood Support Groups: All Pro Dad

Dan Fairbanks was invited to speak before the Commission. Mr. Fairbanks discussed his efforts to start an All Pro Dad fatherhood group in Keene. All Pro Dad is sponsored by Family First, a non-profit organization which provides resources on marriage, parenting, and fatherhood. It is a discussion and support group for fathers (children are welcome at the meetings). Groups meet once per month to share parenting advice and connect with each other. There is also an email list with daily parenting tip emails. All Pro Dad is affiliated with a small number of NFL teams which open their stadiums for a three-hour event where dads and their children can meet with professional football players and coaches. Their web site can be found at <http://www.allprodad.com>.

Mike Geanoulis suggested that the Commission assist in distributing information and raising awareness about All Pro Dad. Mike offered to draft a public service announcement and distribute it in the Keene area before an upcoming meeting.

The Keene All Pro Dad group meets on the first Saturday of the month at 10 AM. For more information, contact Dan Fairbanks at mrallprodad@hotmail.com.

Men's Health Awareness: Wear Blue Day

Mike Geanoulis noted that he recently discovered an awareness campaign called Wear Red Day. Wear Red Day is intended to raise awareness about heart disease risks among women. Mike felt that this was a useful idea and wished to apply it to men's health awareness in some way. He suggested that September 1 be declared Wear Blue Day to help raise awareness of men's health risks, and to remind men to see their doctors for an annual physical during the month.

Responsibility in Reproduction:

Mike Geanoulis relayed a story in which he was recently chastised for suggesting that responsibility in reproduction be an important social issue to address. Mike noted that while it is frequently the case that men are more often blamed for "getting women pregnant and leaving," that this stereotype unfairly portrays the decision to create children as a burden men are primarily responsible for, when the truth of the matter is that both men and women bear equal responsibility in such an act.

Despite the fact that this double standard is held by many people, Mike agreed that efforts need to be made to better educate men to fully understand the lifelong responsibility and life-changing nature of fatherhood. With better education, he hopes that men and women will be more careful about the way in which they bring children into the world, including by building stable relationships (particularly within marriage) to maximize benefits to their children.

Communication with DHHS:

Mike Geanoulis requested that another letter be sent to the NH Department Health and Human Services to make the new commissioner, Nicholas A. Toumpas, aware of our prior effort and desire to:

1. Obtain a better handle on state data related to fatherlessness.
2. Estimate the costs of fatherlessness to the taxpayer.
3. Obtain help to improve the father/child connection by way of a permanent liaison to the commission.

Since some members of the Executive Council are interested in this effort, Mike requested that this letter should be cc'd to them, as well. Joe Mastromarino agreed to send this letter before the next meeting.