Community & College Commission
Park Center Hall of Fame Room
Meeting Minutes: December 9, 2013
7 p.m.

Attendees
John Bennett
Carolyn Bershad
Michael Catalano
Scott Conroe
Steve Dangler
Tom Gallagher
Carl Gambitta
Kimberly McRae Friedman
Adam Megivern
Tom Michales
Fred Pierce
Kim Pietro
Lee Price
Mark Prus
Greg Sharer
Bruce Tytler
Melony Warwick (support)
LeighMarie Weber
Susan Wilson

Absent
Ken Dye
Katie Silliman

Opening & Welcome

Co-Chair Bruce Tytler welcomed everyone and a quick round of introductions was done. Bruce reminded the advisory group of its charge to make recommendations to SUNY Cortland President Erik Bitterbaum and Cortland Mayor Brian Tobin. The group is an advisory council and has no policy-making authority.

Website and Email Update

Kim Pietro reported that the meeting schedule has been updated, with two committee meetings scheduled in the Miller Administration Building and the rest in the Park Center Hall of Fame Room. The schedule was also shared with the news media. Up-to-date
contact information has been provided to include committee assignments. The group will break up into subcommittees. The expectation is that subcommittee members will be present at the open meetings of their groups. All commission members are welcome to attend any subcommittee meeting, but they are only required to attend their own.

Kim reported that the Website architecture is currently being built and will house meeting minutes, the full meeting schedule and e-mail contact information allowing anyone to write to the group. The site will be on SUNY Cortland’s Website through the public relations page. The commission will have an email address: commission@cortland.edu and provide an automatic reply. The emails will go to Kim Pietro, Bruce Tytler and Melony Warwick and will be forwarded accordingly. Senders will use an email form that will allow them to identify themselves by name and whether their concern is primarily as a student, community member, business owner or landlord. The Website will be linked to the Cortland County and City of Cortland websites and shared with the Cortland Standard and other news media. Fred Pierce will do a news release once the site is up and running.

Kim commented that Alpha Sigma Alpha sent a letter to President Bitterbaum that was distributed with the meeting materials. Kim also commented that SGA president LeighMarie Weber will be instrumental in getting students to attend the student open meetings.

**NYS Liquor Authority**

Kimberly McRae Friedman reported that she, Cortland Chief Michael Catalano and Mayor Tobin were invited to Amy Johnson’s health class at Cortland High School and Amy’s students shared their ideas about limiting the negative impacts of Cortaca weekend. It was the beginning of a project and the students were really excited. The students were encouraged to attend the Commission’s student open forums. The class brought up a couple of good ideas already and their final suggestions will be shared with this group.

On Dec. 10, Kim F. and Jo Ann Wickman will be attending a community forum of the New York Alcohol Policy Alliance, an advocacy group focused on public policies against excessive alcohol consumption. Dennis Rosen, head of the New York State Liquor Authority, will be in attendance. They will be able to ask questions of him such as do we have any ability to keep bars from opening at 8 a.m. during Cortaca weekend. This
meeting was scheduled long before Cortaca, and mostly general policy and procedure questions will be asked. Kim F. reported that she will bring information back to the group at the next meeting. A brief discussion ensued.

**Subcommittee Discussions**

Commission members broke into their subcommittees for detailed discussions then reported out to the larger group.

**Landlords:** Greg Sharer reported the subcommittee needs more information on local ordinances and how they apply and which properties are problematic hot spots. They also need to know what requirements are included in leases and how are they enforced. Tenants may need to be educated on how to safely and effectively have a party and to know when it is getting out of hand. The subcommittee is curious to see who shows up at the open meetings; will it be landlords or those that have problems with landlords? Mike Catalano commented that some landlords don’t live locally and that makes a difference.

**Community:** Bruce Tytler reported that all speakers at the public meeting will be asked to sign in and will have up to three minutes to address one of the following five categories of questions: neighborhood concerns; safety concerns; potential policy changes; legal/law enforcement concerns and “other.” There will be five easels with blank flip charts, each dedicated to one of the concerns. Volunteers will write ideas and issues on them during the course of the meetings. The first meeting on Jan. 8 will be to listen to what people have to say. The second meeting on Feb. 13 will allow anyone who was not able to speak at the first meeting give their input, then it will focus on possible solutions.

**Students:** Steve Dangler reported the group looked at the behavior during Cortaca weekend by breaking down those involved into current students — both on and off-campus — alumni and visitors. Another focus was the impact of social media. There are numerous dynamics involved in what happened. Many college staff members were at the game in Ithaca and were unaware of what was taking place in Cortland. The subcommittee talked about how students are managed and dealt with and different strategies that might work. The subcommittee wants to vet these strategies and come up with a list of options. They would like to get a random group of students together and have a discussion with them and get information to help develop strategies.
Kim Pietro reported that LeighMarie mentioned that we have to look at how we market the student forums to ensure we get students to attend. Scott Conroe commented that the group talked about how other colleges have taken over these types of “party” events and whether an event could be moved on to the SUNY Cortland campus. The consensus by the subcommittee members was no. Carl Gambitta commented that other events on campus that weekend also attract more people to the campus and surrounding neighborhoods and suggested they might be limited. Susan Wilson, however, noted that cancelling all other events creates no other alternative but to go downtown.

Steven Dangler commented that because the game is televised, fewer tickets are being sold to the game. This year, 800 tickets were returned to Ithaca unsold. When it wasn’t televised, more people attended the game, which is a well-controlled environment that does not allow alcohol consumption. Weather also contributes to behavior as well. Steve reported that when the game is in Cortland, enforcement is key.

Businesses: Fred Pierce reported that there are a lot of questions that can’t be answered unless they hear from members of the business community. The subcommittee is going to arrange a meeting with members of the Cortland Regional Sports Council, the Cortland Area Innkeepers Association, The Cortland Restaurant and Tavern Owners, and the Cortland County Chamber of Commerce to get a better perspective. It is important to get buy-in from business owners from the beginning. Some businesses make more money from Cortaca than when the NY Jets are in town. The meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 19.

Meeting Next Week

After a brief discussion, the group agreed not to meet on Dec. 16, as not enough members will be available. At the Jan. 6 meeting, Mike Catalano will provide information on all criminal charges and reported damaged related to Cortaca weekend. The committee will look at the timeline of what occurred leading up to Cortaca. The group will also finalize public meetings details and Scott Conroe will report on how other colleges have dealt with similar incidences. It was decided the meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. and will be in Miller Building, Room 405 as noted.

Closing/Once Around
Overall the group felt good about the commission's progress to date.

Meeting adjourned 8:49 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melony A. Warwick