

ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

VILLAGE OF WARWICK
DECEMBER 7, 2022

On December 7, 2022, Village Trustee Carly Foster met with students from Mr. Ottochian's Youth in Government class at Warwick Valley High School. The purpose of the meeting was to talk with the students about their perspectives on how local government can better engage the public, how they feel youth could be engaged in local government, as well as the Memorial Park Master Plan. Students present ranged from 9th to 12th graders and there were about 25 students in the room.

Trustee Foster opened the meeting by sharing a little bit about herself and her history, as well as the role of trustee in local government. She also walked through the purpose of a master plan and the timing of the project. Students introduced themselves and shared their favorite outdoor activity.

Students shared the following favorite outdoor activities: walking and talking with friends, hiking, running, biking, basketball, horseback riding, kayaking, paddleboarding, crew, sledding, and lacrosse.

Students shared the following feedback regarding how they might like to be engaged in local government activities:

- Students would like to be able to share feedback on decisions made, and provided the following ideas:
 - Be made aware of and invited to Village Board meetings so they can learn more about decisions being made and provide input in real time
 - Have Village officials come to the school and to youth events to share what is happening as well as directly inquire for feedback
 - Related ideas included regular meet and greets and Youth Town Halls
- Students like to be aware of what is happening in local government and provided the following feedback to help increase awareness:
 - Publish an email newsletter that people can opt into on the website
 - Share a newsletter through the school
 - Engage in social media that is outside of feedback (most present indicated using Instagram)
 - One student suggested posting photos of events that demonstrate their relevance to the community and that everyone is welcome, such as an image of a child playing at a meeting
- Students expressed the desire to become more deeply engaged in local government, and shared the following ideas:

- Consider hosting internships and / or shadowing opportunities for high school students
- Consider creating a student board
- Consider integrating students into existing boards
- Connect students to opportunities for community volunteering and charity events / fundraisers
- A student expressed that they feel most engaged in topics:
 - That will have a community impact
 - Where there is a clear end goal / purpose
 - When they are able to contribute
 - When they are able to connect emotionally to the people they might be working with / are doing the work

Trustee Foster and the students spent much of their time together discussing the topics above, but students also provided the following feedback regarding Memorial Park:

- Most students expressed an awareness of the park, that they had been there, and several reported regular attendance at the park
- Students asked for:
 - Pickleball courts
 - Increased ADA accessibility
 - Features for all ages
 - Art and inclusive cultural elements that help minority populations within our community feel welcomed and “more like a Warwick resident than an outsider”
 - Opportunities for biking

At the close of the meeting, the students, Mr. Ottochian, and Trustee Foster discussed the desire for the Village to meet with students on a monthly basis to provide updates and gather feedback.