

REGULAR MEETING-MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL-MAY 24, 2004

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson called the regular meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 7:35 p.m. in the Council Chamber of the Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Blair, Clouette, Haddad, Hawkins, Paterson, Paulhus, Redding, Schaefer, Thorkelson

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Thorkelson moved and Ms. Blair seconded to approve the minutes of May 10, 2004 as presented.

So passed unanimously.

Mr. Clouette moved and Ms. Blair seconded to approve the minutes of the special meeting of May 11, 2004 as presented.

So passed unanimously.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Isabelle Atwood, Wormwood Hill Road, spoke in support of the Dorwart property for Open Space Preservation. She also encouraged the town to pursue the purchase of the McDaniel property. The Dorwart property will provide the last link in a trail connecting Mansfield Hollow with the Coney Rock and Fifty-foot cliff Preserves.

Carol Abramson, 214 Wormwood Hill Road, spoke in support of the purchase of the Dorwart property for Open Space.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Pledge of Allegiance at Town Council Meetings

Joan Buck, 6 Sumner Drive

She read a letter to the Council, and noted that "whatever your decision, it must reflect the will of the majority of the members".

David Markowitz, 79 Charles Lane

He felt that the pledge could be omitted.

Matt Proser, 56 Olsen Drive

He spoke on the history of the pledge, and felt that the pledge did not make the government.

Tim Quinn, Depot Road

He expressed his opinion that the pledge is a patriotic spirit that should not be

regulated or mandated it should not be legislated into a Town Council meeting.

Cheryl W. Stevens, 4 Thornbush Road Ext.

She hoped that the Council would consider saying the pledge to the flag because the flag is the symbol of our nation and should be shown respect.

Dolly Whitham, 99 Birchwood Hts.

"The first Amendment provides checks and balances. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion (and in the same sentence) there will be no law prohibiting the free exercise of religion. Making accommodations for one another is part of belonging to a Republic. The Pledge of Allegiance gives us a tiny moment when together we acknowledge our country and are grateful for what we have. There is nothing wrong with saying it. Most of us have had spiritual or temporal help along the way. Thank you."

Sara Steven Flower, 17 Old Schoohouse Road.

She was in favor of saying the pledge however if those who chose not to say it could remain seated. She read a letter from William Jordan, 243 South Eagleville Road.

Jane Blanchard, 13D Sycamore Drive, questioned the need to say the pledge and suggested to sing the Star Spangled Banner.

Vic Kaplan, 8 Mansfield Hollow Road Ext., was not in favor of saying the pledge. He asked why it was being brought up now? He felt it was the times and the political situation in our nation. He felt that the pledge will not bring peace and the world's problems will not be solved by saying the pledge.

Meredith Lindley, 72 Beech Mountain Road, spoke in favor of saying the pledge. She was proud to be an American and would stand for the pledge, however others could make their own choice. Mansfield is a diverse community and should offer a personal choice.

Mary Perry, 11 Spring Hill Road, spoke in opposition to saying the pledge at Town Council meetings.

John Plank, Dog Lane, released his time to speak to others as he opposed the saying of the pledge and others had already expressed his view.

Bruce Bellm, 441 Storrs Road, spoke in opposition to saying the pledge; we are in a time of crisis. He felt that the pledge of allegiance was said to protect the institution of our government but a pledge is not necessary. We need to put our country right by examining what is going on, not by the recitation of the pledge.

Jody Newmyer, 19 Center St, as a member of the first Town Council stated that the Council then never said the pledge. Municipal business was the business to be done.

David Kloss, 72 Beech Mountain, read a letter expressing his opinion of saying the pledge before council meetings.

Sharry Goldman, 187 Browns Road, spoke on the most important thing a person should do to show patriotism and that was to vote. She was concerned that only 300 persons voted in the last referendum held in which all voters could have expressed their opinion. Council should be encouraging people to vote.

Cynara Stites, Hanks Hill Road, thanked the Council for serving the town and felt that service to the town was more patriotic than saying the pledge.

Katherine Paulhus, 720 Middle Turnpike, in favor of pledge but it should not be mandated but a matter of choice.

Barbara Lavoie, 251 Mulberry Road, spoke in favor of the pledge. She feels an incredible pride in the flag and what it stands for.

Tulay Luchiano, 828 Warrenville Road, expressed her concern that this was just a political issue, you do not need to say the pledge, and it should be business as usual without it.

Linda Sabatelli, 97 Cemetery Road, expressed concerns that the issue has not originated from within the Council itself, but from others. What will be the impact upon the council are they being subjected to intimidation. She recommended that the Council continue their dedication and service to the Town without the pledge.

Eleanor Plank, 99 Dog Lane, said that the pledge was not necessary, but what was important was "With liberty, and justice for all...."

Edmund Smith, 166 Storrs Road, this is not the time to say the pledge.

At 9:38 the public hearing closed.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

2. Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for Year Ended June 30, 2003

Mr. Schaefer moved and Mr. Clouette seconded that effective May 24, 2004, to accept the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for Year ended June 30, 2003.

So passed unanimously.

3. Financial Statements Dated March 31, 2004

Mr. Schaefer moved and Ms. Blair seconded that effective May 24, 2004, to accept the Financial Statements dated March 31, 2004.

So passed unanimously.

4. "An Ordinance Designating the Municipal Aquifer Protection Agency for the Town of Mansfield"

Mr. Greg Padick, Town Planner, explained that the state Department of

Environmental Protection, has recently adopted aquifer protection land use regulations that require municipalities to designate a municipal aquifer protection agency. In the early 1990's the Town Council had designated the PZC to serve in this role, but this was never adopted as an ordinance. The PZC (Planning and Zoning Commission) has offered to continue as the municipal aquifer protection agency.

Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Hawkins seconded that effective May 24, 2004, to schedule a public hearing for 7:30 p.m. at the Town Council's regular meeting on June 14, 2004 to solicit public comment regarding "An Ordinance Designating the Municipal Aquifer Protection Agency for the Town of Mansfield".

So passed unanimously.

Mr. Clouette moved and Mr. Hawkins seconded to add item 5A to the agenda for action "Pledge of Allegiance"

So passed unanimously.

5. Spring Weekend

Town Manager is still waiting for reports from the State Police.

5a. " Pledge of Allegiance at Town Council Meetings"

Mr. Clouette moved and Mr. Schaefer seconded to adopt the following resolution:

Whereas:

1. The Pledge of Allegiance has not been a traditional part of public meetings in Mansfield
2. There is not a broad consensus in the community regarding the Pledge; and
3. Recitation of the Pledge will be a divisive rather than unifying experience,

Be it resolved, that the Mansfield Town Council will continue its current practice of not reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor called for a voice vote.

Motion so passed with two voiced no votes of Blair and Paulhus.

No abstentions.

V. NEW BUSINESS

6. Grant Application: Targeted Capacity Expansion for Adolescent Substance Treatment in Northeastern Connecticut

Mr. Kevin Grunwald, Director of Social Services was present to answer questions from the Council.

Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Schaefer seconded that effective May 24, 2004, to

authorize the Town Manager to prepare and submit an application in the amount of \$500,000 per year for a three-year period to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Substance Abuse Treatment to provide services for Targeted Capacity Expansion for Adolescent Substance Treatment in Northeastern Connecticut, and to execute related contract agreements with the Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse to establish conditions regarding the administration of the grant program.

So passed unanimously.

7. Open Space Acquisition-Dorwart Property

Mr. Greg Padick, Town Planner, spoke to this acquisition. Both the Open Space Preservation and the Planning and Zoning Commission have recommended that the Town submit a grant application to the Department of Environmental Protection to obtain funding to purchase the Dorwart property of approximately 60 acres. The land is on Wormwood Hill and Mulberry Roads. Since the next round of grant applications are due on June 10, 2004 the staff recommended to prepare the application as soon as possible. This piece is consistent with the Plan of Development. After much discussion the Council requested that the Manager also discuss with the owners of the property the possibility of purchasing additional road frontage.

Ms. Blair moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to adopt the following resolution:

RESOLVED, effective May 24, 2004, that Martin H. Berliner, town Manager of the Town of Mansfield, is hereby authorized to submit an application for funding under the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition program with the State of Connecticut to acquire permanent interest in land known as the Dorwart Property, pursuant to Section 7-131d to the Connecticut General Statutes.

So passed unanimously.

8. Open Space Acquisition-Former McDaniels Property

Mr. Thorkelson moved and Mr. Clouette seconded that the Town Manager aggressively pursue the matter of purchase of the McDaniel's property with the heirs, for open space acquisition.

So passed unanimously.

9. Mansfield Public Schools Public Water System Repairs

Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Schaefer seconded to adopt the following Resolutions:

RESOLVED:

- a. That the Town Council establish a School Building Committee for repair of the Public Water Systems at Goodwin School, Southeast School, Vinton School, and Mansfield Middle School, and appoint the Mayor and the Chairman of the Board of Education to the Committee.

- b. That the Town Council authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to file an application for a School Building Project.

So passed unanimously.

10. Agreement between the Town of Mansfield and Regional School District No. 19 for Public Works Services

Item not ready for Council.

VI. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

VII. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

VIII. REPORTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Council members discussed how town meetings and referendums could be better advertised to have more participation.

Mr. Paulhus spoke on the dinner given by the University of Connecticut at the Eagleville Fire House for all the many fire, emergency companies that had assisted at the University during Spring Weekend. The Mayor, Mr. Paulhus, Ms. Blair all attended. Mr. Paulhus said he was disappointed that no one from the Mansfield Volunteer Fire Company attended.

Mayor Paterson spoke on the Mansfield Sister Cities Program, which was held in Mansfield Massachusetts on May 15-22. Delegates from many Mansfields including Germany, England, Canada, Ohio, New York, and Tennessee attended. Mayor Paterson and Town Clerk Gerdson had a great opportunity to speak with and share the many facets of Municipal Government. They look forward to attending the next conference, which will be held in Mansfield Ohio in 2008.

Mayor Paterson and Mr. Paulhus attended the 10th Anniversary of the Mansfield Rehabilitation Center on Sunday.

Mayor Paterson spoke on the Flamingo Project being presented by the Garden Club. Decorated pink flamingoes are on display all over town in the Library, Community Center and Town Hall. On May 29th the Garden Club will auction them off at the same time there will be plant sale at the Mansfield Library.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The grant requesting funds for a sign at the four corners was not funded.

Willimantic had begun its' last Thursday evenings on Main street. The street is blocked off to traffic and vendors are allowed to set up booths to display sale or food items. There is music and entertainment.

There is currently a problem with a condominium association that is having a septic system problem. The Town owns land beside it, and may be asked to use the land for a community septic area.

Staff will be returning to the Council to discuss the conversion of the Reynolds School, now being used as storage for the town, back into a school.

Town Manager would like to see a volunteer appreciation day for the townspeople who assist in many ways. Mr. Haddad said that the committee on committees is willing to do it.

X. FUTURE AGENDAS

Mr. Clouette asked that the issue of facilities on the Southeast park be discussed.

XI. PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

11. E. Paterson and M. Berliner re: University of Connecticut Spring Weekend Celebration
12. M. Berliner re: Appointment to Mansfield Downtown Partnership Board of Directors
13. G. Padick re: EIE, UConn's Proposed Football Complex, Indoor Athletic Facility, Tennis Court Relocation Project on Stadium Road
14. Town of Mansfield/Mansfield Public Schools/Regional 19 Board of Education Resource Sharing/Allocation
15. UConn Students Enrolled at Storrs Campus
16. University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service re: Annual Report on Activities of Green Valley Institute
17. Office of Policy and Management re: Recommended Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut 2004-09
18. C.vanZelm re: Festival on the Green
19. CCM Municipal Labor Relations Data Reporter-"Town of Mansfield Eliminates Costly Liability of Accrued Sick Leave"
20. Proclamation by the President: National Hurricane Preparedness Week

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Not needed.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

At 10:05 p.m. Mr. Thorkelson moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to adjourn the meeting.

So passed unanimously.

Elizabeth Paterson, Mayor

Joan E. Gerdson, Town Clerk