

REGULAR MEETING-MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

January 28, 2008

Mayor Elizabeth Paterson called the regular meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Audrey P. Beck Building.

I. ROLL CALL

Present: Blair, Clouette, Duffy, Haddad, Koehn, Nesbitt, Paterson, Paulhus, Schaefer

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Clouette moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to approve the minutes of the December 10, 2007 meeting as corrected. Motion passed with Mr. Haddad, Ms. Blair and Mr. Schaefer abstaining. Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2008 meeting as corrected. Motion passed with Ms. Blair abstaining.

III. MOMENT OF SILENCE

Mayor Paterson requested a moment of silence in honor of and respect for our troops around the world.

IV. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Robert Kremer, 67 Charles Lane, questioned the need for the Housing Code, noting that he is a landlord who has maintained his property and paid his taxes. (Statement attached)

Mary Gawlicki, 132 Lorraine Drive East, expressed concern regarding the wording and effectiveness of the Housing Code and asked that the Town let citizens know how to properly sign a petition. (Statement attached)

V. PUBLIC HEARING

1. An Ordinance Providing a Tax Exemption for Farm Buildings

Irene LaPointe, Town Assessor, outlined the exemption program and estimated the number of residents who might qualify as 35. Ms. Koehn requested a review of how the inclusion of the set acreage stipulation might effect the ordinance.

Quentin Kessel, 97 Codfish Falls Road, spoke in favor of the ordinance commenting that the Town Council should do whatever they can to keep parts of the Town rural.

Vicky Wetherell, 33 Summit Road, who is a member of the Open Space Preservation Committee and their representative to the Agriculture Committee spoke in favor of the ordinance. She commented that this is one component of a complex support mechanism for farms. (Statement attached)

Betty Wassmundt, 54 Old Turnpike Road, spoke against the proposed ordinance and questioned the definition of seasonal workers as the term applies to the Town. (Statement

attached)

David Freudmann, 22 Eastwood Road, spoke against the ordinance urging the Council not to grant exemptions to specific financial groups. Mr. Freudmann commented the ordinance is ripe for abuse, creates a distortion in the economic order, creates a two-tiered system of landlords, opens the way for other professions to request assistance and in the long run will not preserve open space.

Anne Wiant-Rudd, 688 Middle Turnpike, spoke in favor of the proposed ordinance noting the importance of the production of local produce. (Statement attached)

Mike Sikoski, 135 Wildwood Road, spoke against the ordinance and suggested a rebate system targeted to farmers who need help might be a better idea. (Statement attached)

The Town Clerk noted a written communication from Elisa Santee, 85 South Bedlam Road, who is a dairy farmer and is in favor of the ordinance. (Statement attached)

VI. OLD BUSINESS

2. An Ordinance Providing a Tax Exemption for Farm Buildings

Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Schaefer seconded to adopt the Ordinance Providing a Tax Exemption for Farm Buildings, dated January 28, 2008, which ordinance shall be effective 21 days after publication in a newspaper having circulation within the Town of Mansfield.

Council members discussed whether the proposed ordinance would save farmland, whether the ordinance should require the tax break be repaid upon the sale of the property, the feasibility of a rebate, the need to maintain a local food supply and the definition of seasonal workers. Mr. Haddad stated that the State often dictates the way ordinances and exemptions can be approved and asked staff to see if the enabling legislation allows any flexibility.

Mr. Clouette moved and Mr. Schaefer seconded to table the motion to the next meeting. Motion passed.

3. Community/Campus Relations

Town Manager, Matt Hart, noted that both the worksheet titled "What Other College Communities Have Done" and the consultant's draft report and staff recommendations regarding the staffing and implementation of the Housing Code, as requested by Council members, is included in the packet.

4. Community Water and Wastewater Issues

Matt Hart, Town Manager, will clarify the Projected Average Day Demand and Available Supply table and will provide the water demand estimations found in the final report of the 1999-2000 UConn Water Supply Plan.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

5. Art Display Policy for Municipals Buildings

Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Clouette seconded to schedule a public hearing at 7:30 PM at the Town Council's regular meeting on February 11, 2008, to solicit public comment regarding the proposed Mansfield Community Center Art Display Policy and the Art Display policy for Mansfield Town Buildings (Other than Schools).

Kim Bova, Jay Ames and Scott Lehman, members of the Arts Advisory Council, were present to answer question. Mr. Lehman commented the guidelines are meant to be quite liberal and serve more to give the artists some direction. The Advisory members noted the importance of each town entity establishing a committee to establish more specific policies.

Motion passed unanimously.

6. 2008 Child Daycare Application

Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Nesbitt seconded to approve the following resolution:

Resolved, that the Town Manager, Matthew W. Hart, is empowered to enter into or amend contractual instruments in the name and on behalf of the Town of Mansfield with the Department of Social Services of the State of Connecticut for a Child Day Care program if such agreement is offered and to have the corporate seal affixed to all documents required as part of any offered agreement.

Resolved, that the Town of Mansfield hereby adopts as its policy to support the nondiscrimination agreements and warranties required under Connecticut General Statutes 4a-60(a)(1) and 4a-60a(a)(1), as amended in State of Connecticut Public Act 07-245 and section 9(a)(1) of Public Act 07-142, as those statutes may be amended from time to time.

Motion passed unanimously.

7. Greenways Small Grant Application

Mr. Schaefer moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to approve the following resolution:

Resolved, effective January 28, 2008, to authorize the Town Manager, Matthew W. Hart to submit an application not to exceed \$5,000 to the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Greenway Program to improve public awareness about the preserved open space, parks and trails along the Willimantic River Greenway. In furtherance of this resolution alone, the Town Manager is duly authorized to enter into and sign said contracts on behalf of the Town of Mansfield. The Town Manager is further authorized to provide such additional information and execute such other documents as may be required by the state or federal governments in connection with said contracts and to execute any amendments, rescissions and revisions thereto.

Motion passed unanimously.

8. Proclamation in Honor of Nation Wear Red Day

Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Clouette seconded to approve the following resolution:

Move, effective, January 28, 2008, to designate February 1, 2008 as Nation Wear Red Day in the Town of Mansfield and to authorize the Mayor to issue proclamation as presented by town staff.

The motion passed with all in favor except Mr. Schaefer who abstained.

(Proclamation Attached)

9. Appointment to Mansfield Downtown Partnership

Mr. Haddad recused himself from participating on this item of business.

Mr. Clouette moved and Ms. Koehn seconded, to appoint Deputy Mayor Gregory Haddad to the Board of Directors for the Mansfield Downtown Partnership, for a term commencing on January 28, 2008 and expiring on June 30, 2009.

Motion passed by all voting members.

10. Compensation for Town Manager

Mr. Schaefer moved and Mr. Clouette seconded, to increase the Town Manager's annual salary by 3.5% retroactive to July 1, 2007.

Motion passed unanimously.

11. Discussion of Future Agenda Items

After reviewing the list of proposed agenda items the Council decided to prioritize 5 items that will not be directly impacted by the ongoing Strategic Planning Process. These items, in no particular order are:

- Revise rules of procedures for Council meetings and annual meeting.
- Create a volume or index of town policy statements (current project).
- Clarify the role of alternates on the Housing Code Board of Appeals.
- Town Manager and Resident Trooper Supervisor to review nuisance abatement ordinance.
- Review establishment of energy improvement district. Research the concept to see if Council should consider such a district.

The Council discussed implementation of the Charter. The Town Manager reported that draft

ordinances necessary to establish Town Departments will be presented at the next Council meeting.

VIII. DEPARTMENTAL AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

No comments

IX. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Mr. Clouette, chair of the Committee on Committees, reported that the Committee has reviewed the proposal for the establishment of a Communication Advisory Committee. Committee members are in agreement that the proposal is feasible and merits referral to the Council. They also agreed on some changes to the language. The two outstanding issues are how best to coordinate with the efforts of the Strategic Planning process and whether the committee should be established by ordinance or resolution. The Town Attorney's opinion on the establishment of the Committee is attached.

Mr. Clouette moved the following recommendations:

Beautification Committee: Brian Krystoff, Patricia Maines, Isabelle Atwood and Frank Trainor

Commission on Aging: Mark Ross, Joan Quarto and Robert Gouldsbrough serving as the Juniper Hill Representative

Cemetery Committee: Barry Burnham, Rudy Favretti and Winston Hawkins

The motion to appoint passed unanimously.

X. REPORTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Council members who participated in the Strategic Planning process's second weekend of vision commented that the process seems to be effective and that sustainability is emerging as an important concern.

Ms. Koehn reported that the energy workshop concerning legislation regarding climate change held on January 23rd was very well received. Roger Smith, coordinator of the Connecticut Climate Change Coalition, was the featured speaker.

XI. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

(Attached)

Council members agreed to schedule a budget retreat on Wednesday February 20, 2008 at 6:00 P.M. at a location to be determined.

XII. FUTURE AGENDAS

Discussed under Item 11 in New Business.

XIII. PETITIONS, REQUEST AND COMMUNICATIONS

12. CCM, "A State Mandated Property Tax Cap on Municipal Revenue: A cure Worse Than the Disease"
13. Chronicle, "Cocoa Comforts Student Study" – 1/17/08
14. Chronicle, "Early School Budget Unveiled" – 1/21/08
15. Chronicle, "Failed Petition Raises Ire of Some Residents" – 1/16/08
16. Chronicle, "Letter to the Editor" – 1/17/08
17. Chronicle, "Mansfield Mulls Tax Breaks for Farmers" – 1/19/08
18. Chronicle, "Rental Ordinance Deserves Another, Closer Look" – 1/24/08
19. Chronicle, "Smith to Host State Forum On High Schools" – 1/15/08
20. Chronicle, "Tougher Standards Eyed for High School" – 1/17/08
21. Chronicle, "Towns Say State Has to Help Them With Taxes" – 1/17/08
22. Connecticut Climate Coalition
23. Conversations for a Green CT
24. Hartford Courant, "Don't Buy Into Biofuel Boondoggle" – 12/16/07
25. D. O'Brien re: Freedom of Information Act
26. D. O'Brien re: Rental Certification Zone Expansion Ordinance Procedures
27. Reminder News, "Vacation Week Camp" – 1/04/08
28. M. Stanton re: Petition to Repeal Amendment to Mansfield Housing Code per Section 901.1, Expansion of Rental Certification Zone Map
29. V. Walton re: Town Council Invitation to Ribbon Cutting

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Paulhus moved and Ms. Blair seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 P.M.

Motion passed unanimously.

Elizabeth Paterson, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk