

REGULAR MEETING-MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL

February 25, 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. Paulhus moved and Mr. Nesbitt seconded to approve the minutes of the February 11, 2008 meeting as presented. The motion passed with all in favor with the exception of Ms. Blair, Ms. Duffy and Mr. Haddad who abstained.

Mr. Nesbitt moved and Ms. Blair seconded to approve the minutes of the February 19, 2008 Special Meeting as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

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

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, questioned the definition of "program" as used in the budget process and suggested that materials for budget meetings be distributed to Council members and the public in advance of the actual meeting. (Statement attached)

Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to move Item 6 "Proclamation Celebrating Forty-Five Years of the Mansfield Conservation Commission" as the next item of business. (See Item 6)

Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Koehn moved that the budget review calendar be revisited as Item 5a on this evening's agenda. Seconded by Mr. Clouette the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to move Item 7 "Meeting with State Legislators" as the next item of business. (See Item 7)

Motion passed unanimously.

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Communication Advisory Committee

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

Resolved, Pursuant to Chapter A192 of the Mansfield Town Code the Town Council shall establish a Communication Advisory Committee.

The membership of the Communications Advisory Committee shall consist of seven (7) members of the public, none of whom shall be serving as elected officials of the Town or Town employees. The Town Council shall make the appointments.

The term of office shall be for three (3) years, except that one (1) shall serve one (1) year from their date of appointment, two (2) for to (2) years from their date of appointment and two (2) for three (3) years from their date of appointment.

The Town Council may appoint Town employees as ex-officio non- voting members of the committee.

The responsibilities of the Communications Advisory Committee shall include but not be limited to:

- Make recommendations to the Town Council concerning general and/or specific communications policies and practices.
- Monitor and evaluate communication policies and practices.
- Review and/or recommend to the Town Council formats for specific types of public meetings (i.e. Town Budget Meeting, Informational Budget Meetings).
- Review and evaluate format for materials distributed for Budget Information Meetings, Town Budget Meeting and any other items as requested by the Town Council and Staff.
- Investigate and recommend best practices for all aspects of communication among the Town Council, Town Administrative staff, Mansfield residents and regional interests when applicable.

Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Nesbitt discussed possible ways to advertise the new Committee. Staff will forward the announcement to available outlets including the Town website, cable station, MEHTA mail recipients, members of the Strategic Planning Search Committee, and the local newspaper.

2. Mansfield Community Center Art Display Policy and the Art Display Policy for Mansfield Town Buildings

Mr. Schaefer moved and Ms. Duffy seconded to adopt the Mansfield Community Center Art Display Policy dated February 25, 2008, and the Art Display Policy for Municipal Buildings dated February 25, 2008.

Motion passed unanimously.

3. An Ordinance Continuing and Establishing Various Administrative Departments by Ordinance

Mr. Haddad moved and Ms. Duffy seconded, to schedule a public hearing for 7:30 PM at the Town Council's regular meeting on March 10, 2008, to solicit public comment regarding An Ordinance Continuing and Establishing Various Administrative Departments Responsible for Public Services.

Motion passed unanimously.

4. Community/Campus Relations

Town Manager Matt Hart updated the Council regarding an opinion from the Town Attorney concerning an interpretation of the Landlord Registration Ordinance. The ordinance states that owners who reside in a unit on the property or associated premises are exempt from registering. To date Staff has interpreted this to mean if there is more than one assessor's property card those properties are considered separately. The Town Attorney has ruled that the map, block and lot and not property cards should determine "associated premises". About a dozen residents are affected by this change in methodology and will receive a refund of the registration fee.

Mayor Paterson announced an event sponsored by the Town, UConn's Office of Alcohol and Substance Abuse and E. O. Smith High School exploring the use of alcohol and drugs. The event "We Are Here To Take It Back" will be held on Thursday, March 6th at 6:00 PM in the E.O. Smith cafeteria.

5. Community Water and Wastewater Issues

Town Manager Matt Hart distributed copies of notes prepared by Town Planner Gregory Padick regarding a meeting he attended to discuss proposed UConn irrigation wells on State owned property located off Agronomy Road. Mr. Haddad, who lives on Storrs Heights, requested an opinion from the Town Attorney regarding his participation in the discussion. Pending that opinion Mr. Haddad recused himself from the discussion. Council members discussed potential impact on neighbors, the establishment of baseline statistics, the effects of well drilling and proactive measures that the Council could take.

Mr. Schaefer moved and Mr. Clouette seconded to direct the Town Manager to ask UConn to test neighborhood wells, soil and area runoff for the presence of chemical or byproducts currently being used and to provide copies of all related reports and studies including the report of the hydrologist and a list of chemical being used.

Motion passed with Mr. Haddad abstaining.

5a. Budget Calendar Revision

Ms. Koehn moved and Mr. Clouette seconded to move the scheduled May 1, 2008 Public Information Session to May 7, 2008 and to move the Town Meeting to May 13, 2008.

Motion passed unanimously.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

6. Proclamation Celebrating Forty-five Years of Mansfield Conservation Commission

Mayor Paterson welcomed Conservation Commission charter members Dr. Samuel Dodd and former Mayor Audrey Barberet, and early members Rudy Favretti, Janet Gaylord Atkins and Peggy Taylor to the celebration. The Mayor noted the Board of Selectmen established the Conservation Commission in 1963 and one of its charges was to inventory Mansfield's natural resources, including water resources. Over the years, working with Joshua's Trust, the Open Space Advisory Committee and the Agricultural Committee the Conservation Committee has contributed greatly to preservation efforts in Town. She thanked the members for their contributions.

Mayor Paterson also thanked Quentin Kessel for bringing this milestone to the attention of the Council and also for all his years of service to the Town.

Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Nesbitt seconded, effective February 25, 2008, to authorize the Mayor to issue the attached Proclamation Celebrating Forty-Five Years of the Mansfield Conservation Commission. (Proclamation attached)

Motion passed unanimously.

Quentin Kessel read a message of congratulations from Warren Church, President of Joshua's Trust.

Audrey Barberet commented that the Town Council and the Conservation Commission deserve tremendous credit for preserving the beauty of Mansfield.

Rudy Favretti noted that the Joshua's Trust was a "child" of the Conservation Commission and the Mansfield Historical Society.

Dr Samuel Dodd described how the original Conservation Commission was formed. Dr. Dodd and some like-minded residents presented a petition to the Selectmen and then recruited members to serve on the original Commission.

7. Meeting with State Legislators

Denise Merrill, State Representative for the 54 District, updated the Council on what she thinks may happen in this short legislative session. Representative Merrill does not see a lot of willingness to change the municipal section of the state budget, which is in its second year of its two-year cycle. Council members discussed the PILOT and ECS grants and how the grant calculations affect Mansfield's budget. Representative Merrill is exploring possible changes to the legislation to address these concerns. Mr. Paulhus noted that one of the problems the Town has is that the Town budget often must be finalized before the state budget is enacted making it difficult to determine revenues.

8. Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program, Schoolhouse Brook Park

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

Resolved, effective February 25, 2008, to authorize the Town manager, Matthew W. Hart, to sign contracts and any amendments, rescissions and revisions thereto to enter the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program for Schoolhouse Brook Park, should the Town's application to the aforementioned program be accepted by the approval agency.

Motion passed unanimously.

VII. QUARTERLY REPORTS

No Comments

VIII. DEPARTMENTAL AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Schaefer questioned an item in the Conservation Commission minutes of January 16, 2008 regarding the transference of 7.6 acres of Town-owned property to White Oak Condominium Association for installation of a community septic system. Town Manager Matt Hart stated that no proposal has been received as of yet and any agreement would require Town Council approval. Council members discussed whether small cities funding is applicable, whether new technology for on-site systems has been studied and what the impact of a possible Department of Environmental Protection order might be. The Town Manager will address these issues when a proposal is submitted to the Town.

IX. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

The Personnel Committee will meet March 4th at 7:00 P.M.

X. REPORTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ms. Blair relayed a message to Council members from her husband, Eddie. He asked that when anyone is near a radio they listen to the way our Town Crew works together to get the job done. He is very impressed with their teamwork.

The Town Manager agreed to distribute emergency contact information list to Council members.

XI. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Attached

Mr. Hart told members that the request to include Natchaug Hospital on the list of private colleges and hospitals has been denied by the Office of Policy and Management but that the Town is appealing that decision.

XII. FUTURE AGENDAS

Mr. Nesbitt requested an accounting of the Town's total investment including cash, in-kind services and future projected cost be included as a part of the Storrs Center Project: Request for Status Report.

Mr. Nesbitt suggested the development of a resolution that would include a program evaluation requirement for all new programs, the setting of a goal for a timetable when all departments will have a formal program, approval of the Town Manager's participation in the GOFA pilot program and criteria that the Council could request a specific performance evaluation when deemed necessary.

Mr. Schaefer requested a report on Item 11, "Special Ed in Mansfield Investigated." The Town Manager will do so for the next meeting.

PETITIONS, REQUEST AND COMMUNICATIONS

9. Chronicle, "A Snowy Day Solution for Parents"-2/14/08
10. Chronicle, "Public Deserves Respect of Boards" – 1/29/08
11. Chronicle, "Special Ed in Mansfield Investigated" – 2/12/08
12. Chronicle, "There's No Barn Like an Old Barn" – 2/14/08
13. Chronicle, "UConn, Group to Meet Over Wells" – 2/20/08
14. Chronicle, "UConn to Study Willimantic River" – 2/9/08
15. V. Cochran re: Sister Cities Association of Mansfield, Ohio
16. M. Hart re: Storrs Center project; request for status report
17. Mansfield Buzz March 2008
18. Mansfield Community Center Member Survey Analysis
19. Mansfield Country: Agricultural Products & Services
20. C. Pellegrine re: Primary Day
21. Planning and Zoning Commission re: Proposed Revision to the Zoning Map and Zoning Regulations
22. Proposed Budget Review Calendar for Fiscal Year 2008/09
23. Request for Proposal re: Development of a Residential Facility for Independent and Assisted Living for Seniors
24. W. Stauder re: Annual Report for 2007
25. Windham Region Chamber of Commerce re: Upcoming Events

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Blair moved and Mr. Clouette seconded a motion to adjourn at 10:45 P.M.

Motion passed unanimously.

Elizabeth Paterson, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk