

REGULAR MEETING – MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
January 25, 2010

Deputy Mayor Gregory Haddad 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: Haddad, Keane, Kochenburger, Lindsey, Moran, Paulhus, Ryan, Schaefer
Excused: Paterson

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Moran moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2010 Special meeting with additions. Motion to approve the minutes as amended passed with Mr. Schaefer abstaining. Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Schaefer seconded to approve the minutes of the January 11, 2010 minutes as amended. Motion passed with Mr. Schaefer abstaining.

Mr. Schaefer moved and Ms. Keane seconded to move Item 6, Discussion with Library Advisory Board, and Item 7, Senior Services, as the next items of business following public comment.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Ordinance Regarding Off Street Parking on Residential Rental Property

Deputy Mayor Gregory Haddad called the public hearing to order and asked the Town Clerk to read the legal notice. The Deputy Mayor noted two items of correspondence, a letter from Walter Hirsch copies of which were distributed and a letter from Steven Rogers which was just received and will be included in the minutes of this meeting.

Director of Planning Greg Padick and Director of Building and Housing Mike Nintean presented a brief overview of the proposed ordinance which requires the submittal, approval and implementation of a parking site plan for 1, 2 and 3 residential properties within the Rental Certification Zone.

Ron Friedman, a West Hartford resident and parent of UConn students, spoke against the ordinance questioning whether the purpose of the ordinance was to coerce students into big box on campus housing.

Chris Kueffner, Ravine Road, commented that although he understands the very real concern, the measure is over reaching. Mr. Kueffner would like to see the Town emphasize education and cooperation.

Richard DeBoer, Mansfield Center, spoke against the proposed ordinance. Statement attached.

Jane Moskowitz, Stonemill Road, commented that the original housing inspection requirements were a good idea because it forced landlords to make changes that would prevent injuries. Ms. Moskowitz does not see the same benefit from this ordinance.

Mike Sikoski, Wildwood Road, spoke against the proposed ordinance commenting that it, like implementation of the housing code, will cost taxpayers money. Mr. Sikoski asked if the ordinance would segregate a class of people (renters).

Quentin Kessel, Codfish Falls Road, asked if current rentals would be grandfathered in and exempted from the ordinance. His rental unit requires backing into the road.

David Freudmann, Eastwood Road, spoke against the proposed ordinance. Statement attached.

John Silander, Silver Falls Road, spoke in favor of the ordinance noting his years of driving to and from work along Hunting Lodge Road and the increase in blight conditions and safety concerns he has witnessed.

Ida Millman, Sycamore Drive, commented that although many residents have occasional parties at their homes they very seldom cause problems. Ms. Millman expressed concern with property values falling in areas where the current parking problems occur.

Tom Haggerty, President of UConn Student Government and a member of the Town/ University Committee, expressed concern that the cost of delineating parking areas will be passed on to the renter and asked if the ordinance was an effort to reduce the amount of student housing in Town.

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, spoke against the ordinance commenting that the proposal is an undue burden on taxpayers, landlords and renters. Ms. Wassmundt noted that the University should provide adequate housing for their students and the Town should enforce the existing laws.

IV. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Cynara Stites, Hanks Hill Road, spoke against the suggestion to move the Human Services Department to the Wellness Center, Statement attached.

Jane Blanshard, Sycamore Drive, spoke in favor of expanding the Wellness Center and transportation opportunities for seniors.

Matt Proser, Sycamore Drive, commented the Human Services Department is still without a Senior Center Coordinator and a social worker.

Lida Bilokur, Wormwood Hill Road, spoke in support of hiring a licensed clinical social worker and included in her statement letters from Dr. Dardick and Dr. Walker. Statement attached.

Sharry Goldman, Browns Road, remarked that she found it difficult to connect the written Senior Services overview with prior reports found on the website. Ms. Goldman stated that she would like to see action items included in the report.

Dave Sawicki, Storrs Road and a fraternity member, spoke to his fraternity's efforts to resolve neighborhood noise complaints. The fraternity is working towards not having events during the week but only on the weekend and will make an effort to inform the Town when they are going to have special events.

Quentin Kessel, Chair of the Conservation Commission, asked the Council to review the latest draft of a letter to the DEP Commissioner from the Committee and urged the Council to allow boards and commissions to forward communications to outside agencies with the disclaimer that they are not speaking for the Town.

Wil Bigl, Hill Pond Road, spoke in support of not relocating the Human Services Department to the Wellness Center.

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, reminded members that Zenny's Restaurant is in foreclosure.

Ric Hossack, Middle Turnpike, is coordinating the census for eleven area towns. He is looking for part time workers and asked any interested parties to find information in the Clerk's office, Human Services, the Community Center or the library. Brochure attached.

Howard Raphaelson, Timber Drive, urged the Council to look at the Wellness Center and to support more services at the Senior Center.

Chris Kueffner, Ravine Road, asked the Council to relook at their goals and to take a different approach, less ordinance oriented.

V. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Report distributed

VI. OLD BUSINESS

2. Ordinance Regarding Off Street Parking on Residential Rental Property

The Directors of Planning and Housing and Building answered Council members' questions. Discussion included how to handle occasional large gatherings at these residences, the fee, the use of the ordinance as a tool in a larger arsenal of other avenues being explored and implemented, the business aspect of rental properties, the optimal number of parking spaces, and the public safety benefits of the ordinance. Members agreed that the ordinance will be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Paulhus left the meeting at 10:30 p.m.

3. Town Council Orientation, Goal Setting

Ms. Lindsey moved and Mr. Ryan seconded to formally endorse the Town Council's Goals and Objectives for the two-year Council expiring on November 8, 2011, as these goals and objectives may be modified from time to time.

The Town Council agrees to add the Town Council's Goals and Objectives for the two-year Council term expiring on November 8,

2011, as these goals and objectives may be modified from time-to-time, to the Council Policy Index.

Mr. Ryan moved and Ms. Moran seconded to amend the motion by not adding the Town Council Goals and Objectives to the Council Policy Index. The motion passed unanimously.

Members discussed the Goals and Objectives and offered amendments to the document. The Town Council Goals and Objectives, as amended, are appended to these minutes.

The motion to approve the Goals and Objectives, as amended, passed unanimously.

4. Community/Campus Relations

Ms. Keane, member of the Community Quality of Life Committee, presented a motion discussed at the Community Quality of Life Committee meeting and asked Council members to approve the following motion: Move, effective January 25, 2010 that the Mansfield Town Council invite President Hogan to use the authority and visibility of his office to address the special challenges faced by residential neighborhoods that are now feeling the impact of disruptive student behavior. It is our hope he will join with our Mayor to create appropriate forums for dialogue. Motion passed unanimously.

5. Community Water and Wastewater Issues No report

VII. NEW BUSINESS

6. Discussion with Library Advisory Board

Chair of the Library Advisory Board Shelia Clark requested their meeting with the Town Council be postponed to another meeting or a workshop.
By consensus the Council agreed.

7. Senior Services

Director of Human Service Kevin Grunwald presented an overview of senior services describing the scope and diversity of available opportunities including the history and offerings of the Wellness Center.

Mr. Grunwald pointed to the specific recommendations of the Strategic Plan Vision Point and stated the goal is to assess what the Town can realistically offer.

Council members discussed the advisability of hiring a licensed clinical social worker, the possible move of the Department, the possibility of a volunteer driving program, and the Wellness Center. By consensus the Council agreed to add a discussion of these issues to a future agenda in order to provide guidance to the department.

8. Proclamation in Honor of Wear Red Day for Women

Ms. Moran moved and Mr. Ryan seconded, effective January 25, 2010, to designate February 5, 2010 as National Wear Red Day for Women in the Town of Mansfield and to authorize the Deputy Mayor to issue the proclamation as presented by Town staff. Proclamation attached.

Motion passed with all in favor except Mr. Schaefer who abstained.

VIII. DEPARTMENTAL AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Schaefer requested an update on the previously proposed tax exemption for farm buildings and on the status of the Potter property.

IX. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Ms. Moran, Chair of the Committee on Committees, reported that they have reviewed the membership of all of the committees and have begun to review volunteer applications. Ms. Moran also outlined plans to recruit additional volunteers using the current email distribution list for the boards and commissions. The Committee is reviewing the proposed vetting procedure for the Ethics Board.

Ms. Moran offered the following recommendations to the Council:

Housing Authority	Richard Long, William Simonsen
School Building Committee	Mary Feathers
Windham Regional Transit	Paul Aho
Advisory Committee on Persons With Disabilities	Michael Collins, Cristina Colon- Semenza
Arts Advisory	Scott Lehman

Agricultural Committee	Allan Cyr, Charles Galgowski, William Palmer, Kathleen Paterson, Carolyn Stearns, Larry Lombard
Open Space Committee	Stephen Lowry, James Morrow, Vicki Wetherell, Kenneth Feathers, Michael Allison
Public Safety Committee	Audrey Barberet, George Cole, Richard Pellegrine, Wunderly Stauder, Susanna Thomas

The motion to approve the recommendations passed unanimously.

Deputy Mayor Haddad, Chair of the Personnel Committee, announced the Committee has reviewed the Town Council Rules of Procedures and has made some changes. Copies of the rules as amended will be forwarded to Council members. The two outstanding issues to be resolved are a recommendation to eliminate the second opportunity for public comment and the appointment of Council standing committees by the Mayor. These issues will be discussed at the next Council meeting. The Personnel Committee is still reviewing the Ethics Code and the Open and Transparent Government Policy.

Mr. Ryan announced the Council budget retreat will be held on February 9th at 6 p.m. He also reported that Region 19 is planning to include a referendum question regarding the track on the May ballot.

X. REPORTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ms. Keane has been appointed co-chair of the Department of Corrections Reentry Council and asked that a representative from Mansfield be suggested by the Council. Members agreed that Chris Paulhus, Vice-chair of the Public Safety Committee should be asked.

Ms. Keane moved to fill vacancies on the Four Corner Sewer and Water Advisory Committee, the Transportation Committee and the Town University Relations Committee. The motion was discussed and members agreed to postpone any action until the next meeting.

Ms. Lindsey requested Council members receive copies of the questions and answers that are posted on the School Building Committee website. Staff will do so.

XI. PETITIONS, REQUEST AND COMMUNICATIONS

9. E. Paterson re: Agreement with Region 19 Board of Education and Region 19 Administrator's Association

10. M. Capriola re: Bergin C.I. Community Notification System

11. Chronicle "Mansfield applies for downtown funding" – 01-12-10
12. Chronicle "Letter to the Editor" – 01-13-10
13. Chronicle "Fitness center hearing slated for Tuesday" – 01-18-10
14. Chronicle "Fed official put funding to good use" – 01-20-10
15. Mansfield Today "Town's access channel will be upgraded" – 01-04-10
16. Mansfield Today "Local business signs on for Storrs Center" – 01-19-10

XII. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Ric Hossack, Middle Turnpike Road, again asked the Council to ask for the resignation of the Ethics Board and stated his opposition to allowing Town policies to supersede a basic code of ethics.

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, expressed her belief that the parking ordinance should not be enacted and questioned the Council's authority to do so.

Mike Sikoski, Wildwood Road, stated he feels the parking tools are already in place to handle the problem.

David Freudmann, Eastwood Road, suggested the Council discuss what they are willing to include in the public component prior to the execution of an agreement with the developers of the Storrs Center project.

Lida Bilokur, Wormwood Hill Road, questioned with regards to the hiring of a social worker what are policy questions and what are administrative questions.

XIII. FUTURE AGENDAS

The Council will review Council member appointments to Advisory Boards at the next meeting.

The Council will reexamine the current policy which states that boards and commissions are not to communicate with outside agencies without the approval of the Town Council and Town Manager.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was offered by Ms. Moran and seconded by Ms. Lindsey. The motion to adjourn passed at 11:55 p.m.

Gregory Haddad, Deputy Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk

January 25, 2010