

REGULAR MEETING – MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
April 26, 2010

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: Haddad, Keane, Kochenburger, Lindsey, Moran, Paterson, Paulhus, Ryan, Schaefer

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Ryan seconded to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2010 Special meeting. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2010 Special meeting. Motion passed with all in favor except Keane, Paulhus and Ryan who abstained. Mr. Haddad moved and Ms. Lindsey seconded to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2010 meeting. Action was postponed pending a review by the Town Clerk of a member of the public's comments. Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Schaefer seconded to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2010 Special meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Paulhus seconded to approve the minutes of the April 19, 2010 Special meeting with a correction and the addition of supplementary material. Motion passed unanimously.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

1. An Ordinance Regarding Off Street Residential Rental Property

Mr. Kochenburger, Chair of the Ordinance Review Committee for this proposed ordinance, described the purpose of the regulation and outlined the changes made since the original presentation.

Joan Hall, Birchwood Heights landlord and resident, spoke in favor of the spirit of the proposed ordinance commenting that all need to do their part to keep the Town as nice as it is.

Quentin Kessel, Codfish Falls Road, expressed appreciation for the revisions supporting the grandfathering of existing conditions, but also expressed concerns regarding the section dealing with backing up onto the street. Statement attached.

Thomas Knecht, member of the UConn Undergraduate Student Government, distributed a statement of position from the organization which expresses their opposition to the ordinance. Statement attached.

Jake Friedman, Northwood Road, agreed with the spirit of the ordinance but feels the draft is extreme. Statement attached.

Radu Gageonea, Hunting Lodge Road, who is both a landlord and a resident spoke against the proposed ordinance commenting that the cost would be passed on to the students and the parking areas unsightly. He would prefer ticketing.

Joe Briody, Little Lane resident and member of the Community Quality of Life Committee, spoke in favor of the proposed ordinance and thanked the members of the Town Council who reviewed it. Mr. Briody stated that the committee has been working on these serious issues for over 2 years and is in support of the ordinance as one measure to reduce the decline in some neighborhoods.

Jim Knox, Birch Road, spoke in support of the ordinance and commented that he feels the Council has been delinquent in taking care of the areas of Town which are in decay. Mr. Knox urged the Council to use his tax dollars to keep the Town from deteriorating.

David Freudmann, Eastwood Road, spoke against the ordinance calling it too costly to enforce, unfair to landlords and discriminatory to renters.

Jeff Vost, Willington Hill Road, objected to exempting the State from the ordinance, the arbitrary number of parking spaces required, the practice of ticketing cars on private property and the cost to the landlords.

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, expressed her concern with the regulation being tied to a percentage of ownership and the use of staff discretion in the enforcement of the ordinance. Ms. Wassmundt urged the Council to vote against the ordinance. Statement attached.

Sarah Milius, Chaffeeville Road, asked the Council to rethink the ordinance and questioned whether there were other methods that could address the problem. Ms. Milius expressed concern for the subjective nature of the enforcement provisions.

Brian Huey, Westwood Road, spoke in favor of the proposed ordinance. Mr. Huey asked the Council to explore whether the parking spots could be tied to the number of bedrooms, whether the owner occupancy requirements might provide a loophole in situations where parents buy a house and their child is one of the residents, and whether the proposed regulations could turn the backyards into parking lots.

Mike Sikoski, Wildwood Road, stated his major concern was allowing Town staff to change the rules as they go along.

John Silander, Silver Falls Lane spoke in favor of the proposed ordinance commenting that it may not go far enough. Mr. Silander described some of the conditions he has viewed including the blocking of bike paths and site lines and front yards being turned into dirt parking lots.

A letter from Joe Soltys, Lynwood Road, in opposition to the proposed ordinance was added to the public hearing record.

IV. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

No comments

By consensus the Council agreed to move Item 3, Community/Campus Relations, as the next item of business.

V. REPORT OF TOWN MANAGER

Report attached

Town Manager Matt Hart expressed his condolences to the family and friends of Dolly Whitham. Mrs. Whitham was a long time Board of Education member, Republican Registrar of Voters and volunteer who will be sorely missed.

VI. REPORTS AND COMMENTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mr. Ryan reported the public information session on the budget was held and attended by two citizens. Mr. Ryan expressed his hope that the local paper would report on the budget prior to the Annual Town Meeting for Budget Consideration.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

2. An Ordinance Regarding Off Street Residential Rental Property

Mr. Haddad asked that the revised draft ordinance be reviewed by the Town Attorney. This item will be added to the agenda of the next meeting.

3. Community / Campus Relations

Fire Marshal John Jackman, Fire Chief Dave Dagon, State Police Sergeant James Kodzis and State Police Lieutenant Francis Convoy presented preliminary information and assessments of Spring Weekend. Additional information will be presented to the Council after staff has been debriefed, the statistics analyzed and the effectiveness of the new initiatives evaluated.

Council members thanked and commended all the staff and volunteers who participated in the management of the event. Mayor Paterson thanked the members of the Council who participated, who in turn thanked those who shepherded them around the event.

Ms. Lindsey and Ms. Keane discussed their concerns and fears regarding what they saw and experienced over the weekend. Town Manager Matt Hart stated one of the major goals of the planning process was de-escalation and limiting outside participation. Plans included parking restrictions, letters to high school students and UConn parents, and safety checks. The Council agreed to discuss the issue again once a report from the Town/Gown Committee is issued.

4. Community Water and Wastewater Issues

Town Manager Matt Hart reviewed the requirements necessary to present the Four Corners bonding authorization to a town meeting. These requirements make it difficult to schedule a town meeting after the Annual Town Meeting for Budget Consideration as previously considered. The Town Manager recommended that the Finance Committee review all proposed bonding authorizations to determine which should be presented at a town meeting and which should be sent to referendum. By consensus the Council agreed.

The Town Manager will ask bond counsel to provide the wording and relevant information on the bonding options to the Finance Committee including how authorization is linked to the fiscal year.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

5. Mansfield 2020 (Strategic Plan) Update

Town Manager Matt Hart provided a status report on the strategic plan including a new vision point specifically for town government. Director of Information Technology Jamie Russell will ask the Communication Advisory Committee to provide input on how best to facilitate residents in communicating with the Town.

6. Fair Housing Policy and Resolution

Mr. Paulhus moved and Ms. Moran seconded effective April 26, 2010 to adopt the attached Fair Housing Policy Statement.

Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Moran moved and Mr. Ryan seconded, effective April 26, 2010, to adopt the attached Fair Housing Resolution.

Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Ryan moved and Ms. Moran seconded, effective April 26, 2010, to adopt the attached Compliance with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Policy.

Motion passed unanimously.

7. Small Cities Public Hearing – Bikepath/Sidewalk Project

Mr. Haddad moved and Mr. Schaefer seconded, effective April 26, 2010, to schedule a public hearing for 7:30 p.m. at the Town Council's regular meeting on May 24, 2010, to solicit public comment regarding the proposed application to the State Department of Economic Community Development for funds under the Small Cities Program.

Motion passed unanimously.

IX. DEPARTMENTAL AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Lindsey asked that the Parking Steering Committee minutes be provided in the Town Council packet. The Town Manager will make sure they are included in the future.

X. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Deputy Mayor Haddad requested the draft Ethics ordinance be added to the agenda for the next meeting. The Personnel Committee has been reviewing the draft and would like Council input on the adjustments and additions. The Committee is also continuing their discussion of open and transparent government and possible additional changes to the Rules of Procedures.

The Town Manager reported on a joint meeting of the Regionalism Committee and Windham town staff. The Committee has asked the staffs to look into the feasibility of establishing a regional collaborative.

XI. PETITIONS, REQUEST AND COMMUNICATIONS

8. Bigl re: AARP Tax-Aide program

9. J. Soltys re: Motion to consider alternations to housing code and motion to consider parking regulations of private property
10. M. Capriola re: Success of Work Study Partnership with UConn
11. G. Padick re: Draft Zoning Regulation Revisions: Definition of Family/Boarding House; Political Signs
12. M. Stanton re: Policy Regarding Advisory Committees' Communications with Outside Agencies
13. Planning and Zoning Commission re: 2010-11 Capital Improvements Budget
14. Mansfield Rid Litter Day
15. State of CT Department of Environmental Protection re: Draft FY10 and FY11 Priority List for the Clean Water Fund
16. CCM re: Bills Proposing New State Mandates on Municipalities
17. Willimantic River Alliance re: Water Trail Open House
18. WINCOG re: Transportation Policy
19. *Parks and Recreation Business Magazine* "Just Add Water" – April 2010
20. Chamber News "Discussing "The State of..." Mansfield" – 04/14/10
21. Chronicle "Letter to the Editor" – 04/08/10
22. Chronicle "Letter to the Editor" – 04/09/10
23. Chronicle "Mansfield budget to go to hearing" – 04/10/10
24. Chronicle "Mansfield forum to focus on school project" – 04/12/10
25. Chronicle "Mixed bag of opinions at budget hearing" – 04/13/10
26. Chronicle "Probate court in Mansfield to move to Tolland" – 04/13/10
27. Chronicle "Forum weighs options for elementary schools" – 04/14/10
28. Chronicle "Mansfield set to get brand new web site" – 04/16/10
29. Chronicle "Editorial – We offer these threads, needles" – 04/19/10
30. Chronicle "It's business as usual for Storrs Center project" – 04/19/10

XII. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL

Betty Wassmundt, Old Turnpike Road, objected to comments regarding citizen interaction with an intern made in Item 10, Success of Work Study Partnership with UConn.

XIII. FUTURE AGENDAS

A discussion of the proposed changes before the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the definition of Family/Boarding House will be added to the next agenda. Staff will prepare information regarding the state of rents in Mansfield including information indicating what the market collects in various areas of Town and surrounding towns.

A discussion of the proposed changes before the Planning and Zoning Commission regarding the regulation of Political Signs will be added to the next agenda.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Paulhus moved and Mr. Ryan seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10:40 p.m.

Motion passed unanimously.

Elizabeth Paterson, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk