

59 Highland Road
Mansfield Center, CT 06250

April 11, 2011

Dear Members of the Council:

I write to ask that changes to the town's noise ordinance be put on the agenda for consideration at the next town council meeting (April 25, 2011). I understand this letter will be distributed to council members before that date.

In short I propose that the town of Mansfield address the growing noise pollution problem by prohibiting the riding of dirt bikes and other off-road vehicles in residential neighborhoods. Both the constant motor noise and the impulse noise emitted by revving the engines of dirt bikes and ATVs infringe on—in fact destroy—the peaceful enjoyment of property. I believe that the freedom we all enjoy and indeed cherish, to use our property as we would like does not extend to any activity that infringes on our neighbor's equal right to enjoyment of his or her property.

I would like the council to consider that those of us for whom this problem is both very real and very disturbing are virtually held hostage by those residents who believe they are exercising their rights by riding—day in and day out, hour after hour, three seasons of the year—on their property, without consideration of how this activity affects neighbors. I believe, in fact, that the impulse noise emitted by these bikes is very likely already in violation of the existing ordinance. Section 134-5, subsection (3) prohibits the “emission of impulse noise in excess of 100 dBA . . . at any time in any other zone (it is not entirely clear what “other zone” means here, though I assume it refers to residential zones). I'm quite sure the noise of a dirt bike exceeds that decibel level, and it most certainly exceeds an acceptable decibel level relative to ambient noise in a residential neighborhood. Very likely, in fact, the impulse noise exceeds the noise standards for motor vehicles found in Title 14, Section 14-80a of the Connecticut General Statutes. The problem is, though, that even if these bikes *do* already exceed legal limits, enforcement is impossible, because it depends on the police arriving on the complainant's property with a decibel meter. I guarantee that riders see an excellent reason to stop riding when the police cruiser pulls up outside the house. This is what I mean by being held hostage. A violation (or what by every human measure should constitute a violation) is no doubt occurring, and peaceful enjoyment of property is destroyed, but (and perhaps you can appreciate my frustration here) nothing can be done. It is surely unacceptable whenever laws intended to protect citizens are routinely broken because enforcement is a *practical* impossibility.

As a society we have certainly passed the point at which evidence needs to be offered for the real effects of noise pollution. I know that individuals have varying tolerances for pollution of all kinds. But the noise of a dirt bike in a neighborhood of one acre lots—the situation we face on Highland Road—makes it impossible to listen to music, work quietly in a garden, read, write, or perform any task

requiring concentration. Moreover, short of moving there is no getting away from the noise. Surely, this is a problem for which there should be redress. The effects of constant noise, particularly repeated impulse noises, are damaging to human sensibilities. We really do not need scientific evidence to prove this (though it exists in abundance); we need only live in an environment in which we are exposed constantly to such noise. If the members of this council value the peace and quiet of their own property, I ask you to imagine a situation in which that peace is undermined, even destroyed entirely, for three seasons of the year. Because should the house next door to yours be purchased by dirt-bike enthusiasts, that is exactly what will happen. I ask you to consider this proposal in that light.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope to speak to the town council in person on April 25th.

Sincerely,



Judith Kucharski

Glenn Thomas
49 Lynwood Road
Storrs, CT 06268
11 April 2011

Wilbur Cross Building, Rm. 203
233 Glenbrook Rd, Unit 4062
Storrs, CT, 06269-4062

Attn: Dean of Students

On the night of Saturday, 9 April, a party was held at a residence rented to students at 78 Lynwood Road. As a result of this party, which drew hundreds of students, significant property damage was incurred by many in our neighborhood, the noise and screaming at 2:00 AM was incredibly disturbing and litter at that property and between that property and the entrance to Lynwood Road has had an enraging effect on everyone in the neighborhood. When I heard the sounds of my mailbox being destroyed at 2:00 AM I stood in my driveway to minimize further property damage. There were students urinating in my yard and walking through my newly planted grass behind where my mailbox once stood. When I ordered them out of my yard, the response was "Make me". I told them I would help them off my property if it came to that. Then one of these students advised me to "Go back in my ****ing house" and came toward me in a threatening manor. When I told them I was waiting for the police to arrive this student just disappeared back into the anonymity of the crowd and disappeared with no apparent sign of concern on his face. When the police arrived, they informed me that there was nothing that could be done. They said that infractions were issued (\$88.00 fine is laughable) and that was the end of what they were able to do. I proposed that they could walk up to one of my vehicles and throw a bottle through a window while I stood beside the car and that there would be nothing I could do. The police officer told me that unfortunately I was correct, there is nothing they can do but respond to a call and if the student can be identified, that student would be held criminally responsible for the act.

In a case like this I would expect UConn to intervene and propose viable solutions to prevent the compromise of a whole neighborhood to a single residence rented to your students. I have spoken with many of the neighbors and we are going to assemble to find out what we can do as well.

I was informed by the UConn campus police that rental contracts between tenants and property owners managed by residential life contains language that calls for eviction when parties are out of control and result in a police response. I would like to know what you do to enforce this. The property owners are Ryan and Cathy McDonald. I will also be contacting them regarding this incident as well as my own legal counsel to educate myself with respect to my own legal rights in this situation, and I will share my findings with my neighbors. Please consider this a matter of high urgency that will soon be escalated if not properly handled in a timely manner.

Approximately 10 mailboxes and/or newspaper boxes were destroyed. Mine was uprooted, destroyed and carried down the street and thrown in the woods. There is litter everywhere and the road sign has been torn down. 78 Lynwood has become an unsightly mess in the middle of an otherwise pleasant and peaceful neighborhood.

Awaiting your response,

Glenn Thomas

April 11, 2011

To: Town Council

From: Betty Wassmundt, Storrs

You need to reduce the budget. Where is the "Shared Sacrifice" that is talked about? Mansfield continues to spend and give generous raises. Regarding recently granted raises and the town manager's pending raise, we are told the raises are 2.25% but 6 months into the period, the raise is really 3% and 18 months into the period, the raise is 6%. Did you read the Chronicle letter by a Mr. Hartley from Windham? He asks, "How is it that town and state officials can justify getting their raises every year?" Most people are getting no raise these days. Even Social Security finds no reason to give an increase. If you want to continue the financial enrichment of Mansfield employees, then you need to cut your budget.

You need to look at all ways to increase efficiency within this government and to cut costs. No business could run the way this town's government does. Unfortunately for the Mansfield taxpayers you, the council, are predominantly from the same system. You think you can satisfy whatever your whim and there will be a stock of taxpayers to foot the bill.

Look at all the free service this town provides: free rent to Eastern Highlands Health – Mansfield taxpayers subsidize 9 other towns; free rent to the Mansfield Discovery Depot – Mansfield taxpayers subsidize a private business; reduced charges to Region 19 for use of the pool – Mansfield taxpayers subsidize Ashford and Willington; free financial service to M. Discovery Depot and M. Downtown Partnership; etc. Require that the town be operated in a professional manner and in the interest of the Mansfield taxpayer. Require that all entities receiving town services pay appropriately for the service. Look closely at the operation of the Finance Department for cost efficiency.

Review all programs for efficacy. For example, consider the Housing Inspection program; you should have done this already. That came about because you wanted to control student behavior – it doesn't do that. Look seriously at what is being inspected every two years and ask yourselves: "Does this make sense?" For example, under this program electrical polarity is going to be inspected every two years. How often do you check the polarity in your own home? What would make said polarity change from year to year? This Housing program is very costly. Do we really need it? Are there other unnecessary programs?

I read recently that there is some program Mansfield will participate in to reduce electric consumption by, I think, 20%. Require town management to do this. Start by reducing the number of operating refrigerators in town hall. Remove the vending machines in the lounge; why pay for an employee health program when you sell junk food to them.

I gather by listening to you that there is no money put aside for regular maintenance and repairs of buildings, etc. You need to do that. Consider the swimming pool in the Community Center. What is its life expectancy? Is money put aside to replace it? Remember, the Mansfield taxpayer has to provide Region 19 with a swimming pool forever and ever and ever. We will replace it.

I would like to see you budget money to provide yourselves with a decent take out meal on those nights when you have early meetings. It pains me to see all the extra pounds from the pizza menus.

I have several specific ideas as to how to save money; perhaps I will email them to you. Thank you.

Tolland, Vernon and Ellington.

Editor:

4-1-11

People on Social Security haven't had a raise in two years. The government says the cost of living hasn't gone up enough to support it. Therefore, no raise.

Employees in the private sector have received lean raises, if any at all. People are lucky to have a job.

How is it that town and state officials can justify getting their raises every year? In lieu of raises, they should take a 10 percent cut in their salaries, start paying more for their own health insurance, use their own vehicles and pay for their own gas. Maybe then the state and town budgets could be balanced.

We voted these officials in to serve, not to take. Town and state taxes rise every year. Where do these officials think the people are going to get the money to pay for these increases?

Dick Hartley
North Windham

Jane Ann Bobbitt Atwoodville Rd.

This is an often addressed topic for you, but I am here to ask you to consider any means to move Assisted Living for Mansfield forward in reality.

As you know, Sharry Goldman and I have asked many people to circulate petitions on this subject. After this effort was underway, there was an announcement that Masonicare was actually moving forward with land purchase. We had set a petition deadline of April 15, so are not presenting the signed petitions tonight.

Why am I, who was on the Committee that chose Masonicare as the preferred developer, here to ask that the process be reevaluated? I believe that the time elapsed since their choice (2008) has been far too long. They evaded giving information with their option on property (site undisclosed) and then finally sent Jon Paul Venoit to the Council last month. When I heard him say that they would build independent units and then add assistant living "as needed", I could hardly believe.

We have many independent living units in Mansfield, available now, and the need that I see every week around me is for assisted living. I am positive that we made that clear in the many hours we spent talking with Masonicare.

Please help any interested parties see that there is water and sewerage available in the south end of Town. The market appeal may be less, but timing is important. I am seeing many friends moving away, not by their choice.

Thank you for listening.

Sharry L. Goldman

187 Browns Road
Storrs, CT 06268

April 11, 2011

To the Mansfield Town Council:

My goals involve, and they have for many years, the construction by a private developer of an assisted living facility in Mansfield.

I want to share my six most pressing current concerns:

1. **The critical distinction between “independent living” and “assisted living”.** There appears to be considerable confusion on the part of the public about the differences between independent living housing and assisted living facilities. A concise explanation by a competent and trusted source could make a big difference. A clear understanding of the difference is necessary for useful discussion of the topic and would be helpful to decision makers.
2. **Access to information.** In order to make good decisions about assisted living, access to information for the council and the public is important. Unfortunately, the Brecht Report is no longer available online. Other materials pertinent to the discussion are available, but difficult to find on the new town website. Readily accessible information supports good decision making.
3. **Time frame and location.** Masonicare, the “preferred developer” is buying the Warren property and is willing to wait for water to arrive there from unknown sources. Reports emanating from the council side have estimated the wait for water at 5-7 years; however my sources on PZC indicate that 5-7 years may be quite optimistic. In addition, a report from the town manager to the council on October 25, 2010 indicated that if and when all the other hurdles were surmounted, it would take 2-3 years before a facility could be designed and built. I see several questions here: Why would a company building assisted living require a property located at walking distance to downtown and the Community Center when the southern end of town already has sewer and water? The Warren property may be desirable for *independent* living, but is irrelevant to assisted living. If Masonicare rates independent living as the priority for siting and other considerations, when if ever do they plan to build assisted living? Mike Savino’s Chronicle article of 3/29/11 reported that “Masonicare is currently looking to build a senior living complex in town, which could include assisted-living units.” Could somebody tell me the meaning of “could”?
4. **Why have a preferred developer?** The advantages to the developer are obvious, but what are the advantages to the town? If there is no hope of providing assisted living for such a long time, why not look at other options? Masonicare, like any other business entity, is welcome to build whatever they want in Mansfield as long as they meet the PZC requirements. But why not open the door to other possibilities for assisted living, since that is the urgent need in Mansfield and environs?
5. **We are not asking for money.** The town budget is under enough pressure now, that one would think that actively seeking a source of income for the town from private developers which also provides a much needed service would have a high priority. The approach outlined by the town

manager at the last council meeting seems unlikely to get us any closer to having either the service or the income in the near term.

6. **Advisory Committee on Assisted Living.** The Town Manager has recommended that the council reconstitute the Assisted Living/Independent Living Advisory Committee to work with Masonicare. If the goal of the council is to make sure that the status of assisted living is not reevaluated in light of current information, they will take that recommendation. Otherwise, they will move forward in a new direction.

When many of us in this room questioned town staff's position that we couldn't have a volunteer driver program because there was too much risk involved, some of us were treated with disdain. But after 18 months of effort to get the truth out, we do now have that program. Those of us involved in that effort deeply appreciated the council members who were open to reasoned argument and willing to give us an opportunity to make our case. This situation seems eerily similar to me. Town staff and developers are accorded unlimited time to address the council. But the public has a perspective that merits consideration too. I do not think it reasonable to expect present and future seniors, or their friends and relatives, to wait while one company with one business plan waits for water issues to be resolved for one property, while other potential developers are frozen out. We're asking for opportunity to move forward. We need to recognize the pressing needs in our community and take positive action.

> Dear Editor:

> In your article on the Mansfield town meeting of 3/28/11
(Chronicle (3/29/11), the reporter mentions a conversation with
> Masonicare Spokesman Margaret Steves; apparently she said that
> Masonicare speculates on building "a senior living complex in
> town, which could include assisted-living units, and currently has a
> purchase option for a 40-acre property." I cannot comment on the
> accuracy of this statement; it seems to have been made outside
> the actual meeting; it does not appear on the town website
> audio of this meeting. However, I remind Masonicare that the seniors
of
> Mansfield have not slogged to town meetings this snow-filled winter,
or marched around with petitions in the biting wind
to get a senior complex which "could" include assisted-living units.
Mansfield seniors must have assisted-living units because this is what
the town seniors need. Mansfield's Seniors, who have been striving for
years
to get an assisted living facility, are not interested in a mere
possibility
> of one or one tangential to independent living. Nor have the residents
of
> Glen Ridge Cooperative sought an independent living
> community an easy walk down the road from their own. Glen Ridge
> seniors are happy in their community and don't intend
> to move. And they certainly don't want a competitive community set up
> "around the block" on Maple Rd., since they are the owners of their
> community.
> Masonicare should be so advised, and the Town Council
and administrators should be so reminded.
What is needed in Mansfield is an assisted living center.
> Assisted living-services include housekeeping; personal care
> assistance: bathing, dressing, personal hygiene; medication
> administration and health monitoring. They can
> offer nursing care, hospice, injections, catheter care,
> and incontinence training. Previous demographic evaluations have
> indicated that our community could support such a facility
> Council members: please put the
> needs and desires of your constituents at the forefront when
> evaluating Masonicare's plan!

Bill Rosen's role. Why water could be found for an independent facility,
not assisted care?

April 11, 2011

To: Town Council

From: Betty Wassmundt, Storrs

I'd like to remind you that Mansfield pretends to subscribe to "Open Transparent" government. I object to the presentation for the Town Manager's raise. Let's state it clearly: the raise is 1.5% from July 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010, and as of January 1, 2011, it is 3%. It is not clear to me what happens then but I think there is another 1.5% increase on July 1, 2011 going up to 3% as of January 1, 2012. This makes a 6% increase by January of 2012. Also, the base for these raises is not clear. Please specify what that is.

It's stated that there is a 15% contribution towards the premium for the manager's health insurance. What is the dollar amount of that contribution? Or, what is the total premium?

I'd like to point out to you, as I have in the past, that there is an inherent conflict of interest in having the Town Manager, or his assistant, negotiate employee compensation when the same compensation will be awarded to him. From a taxpayer's point of view, this town manager/council form of government is not in my interest. I suggest you make the town manager's compensation inversely proportional to what he negotiates for employees. That would be in my interest. Thank you.