

Mansfield, Connecticut Town Council Meeting May 23, 2011
Public comment by David Freudmann, 22 Eastwood Rd.,
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Topic: Storrs Center: Who will bail us out?

The Storrs Center project, promoted over many years, was authorized by the Council on January 4, 2011, and is a done deal.

I have cautioned that a parking garage will be a money pit. A management plan from the Parking Steering committee never materialized. Worried? Not this Council. You bound the town to a fifty-year contractual commitment anyway.

I have cautioned that long-term debt, which was down to \$1.5 million in June 2010, will balloon to \$5.5 million by June 2012. Cumulative Proposed Five Year Capital Improvements to be financed by bonding total \$15.2 million, per page 175 of next year's budget. (7/1/11-6/30/12) Debt service is increasing by approximately \$100,000 per year and will accelerate, as renovations to the four schools progresses and as recently-issued debt service encompasses interest plus principle, not just interest only. Is this Council alarmed? Apparently not.

Is \$350,000 being put aside to pay for the relocation costs that will mostly hit in budget year 2013 when Phase 1A of the Storrs Center project is completed? No. But yet, this profligate Council just approved \$400,000 for a sidewalk that will serve only a few - but a demanding, insistent, influential few.

Mansfield is heading for a fiscal crisis that will occur within four years. The Storrs Center project will cost the town hundreds of thousands of dollars per year, mainly due to the costs of controlled parking in general and the parking garage money pit in particular.

I'll mention ten groups, institutions and organizations who with their combined cheerleading, helped turn this project into an unstoppable juggernaut.

1. Town Committee of the major political party
2. Mansfield League of Women Voters
3. The University of Connecticut
4. Conn. Department of Economic and Community Development
5. Mansfield Business and Professional Association
6. Smart Growth for Mansfield
7. Windham Region Council of Governments
8. 1000 Friends of Connecticut
9. Connecticut Main Street Center
10. The Last Green Valley

When it is realized that the intermodal center, controlled parking and everything else associated with the parking garage money pit are hemorrhaging red ink, which of those august groups will bail us out?

David Freudmann