

July 11, 2011

To: Town Council  
From: Betty Wassmundt

RE: Nuisance Ordinance

I am opposed to this ordinance because it is quite problematic in that there is no provision for equitable enforcement of said ordinance. It seems that it is the intent of this ordinance to allow for subjective determination as to whether a nuisance has occurred or not and this will provide for, and encourage, inconsistent application of this ordinance.

I expect that your goal is to take punitive measures against landlords in the hope that it will modify behavior and make the landlord control his tenants but this ordinance applies to all people of Mansfield. What will you do if some one complains about his neighbor who happens to love his backpack blower? That is a very annoying noise to many people; it is a noise that carries throughout a neighborhood. What will you do if someone signs a written complaint because his neighbor uses a table saw outside his home? That, too, is a loud and annoying noise. What will you do if someone signs a written complaint about a barking dog?

Finally, I urge you to require the Town Manager to make available to you and to the public all of the legal reviews he has referred to. He states that the Town Attorney, Attorney General's Office and the Connecticut State Police have concluded that this ordinance is legally sound. This is information which should be available for all to review before any vote is taken.

July 11, 2011  
Ric Hossack  
Storrs

I would like to talk about the proposed ethics ordinance. The ordinance as presented by the personnel committee is nothing like the code sent to them by the ethics board. After 2+ years of plodding through the revisions to our current code, the ethics board finally sent their work to the personnel committee in January of 2010. Kudos to the ethics board on completing this arduous task. After nearly a year and a half the personnel committee has now presented its version, which as it turns out was concocted by our town attorney and assistant town manager. Mr. O'Brien has stated in several meetings that he used the "Model Code", updated in March of 2009 by the state, as a basis for the code you have before you tonight. I have read the model code many times and I still cannot find the exclusions for town employees mentioned in section 25-6 Rules (g) or the exclusions for University of Connecticut employees mentioned in section 25-6 Rules(c).

The issue of town employees "borrowing" or using town resources for personal use is apparently acceptable to the personnel committee because they specifically allow for this practice to continue. By allowing this by use of "written policy" simply dilutes this complete section. The borrowing of equipment costs the taxpayers untold thousands of dollars in repair and replacement costs every year. Although the practice has continued for many years, it should be stopped immediately by town management or in lieu of management not doing the right thing, it can and should be stopped by an effective ethics code. The model code states... "No public employee or public official shall request or permit the use of municipal-owned vehicles, equipment, facilities, materials or property for personal convenience, except when such are available to the public generally or are provided as municipal policy for the use of such public employee or public official in the conduct of official business". Simple, concise, and to the point. Please change our revision to reflect this.

The issue of excluding UConn employees from the provisions of the ethics code is fundamentally wrong. To specifically exclude the employee base from the towns largest employer is wrong on so many levels. If left remaining in our revised code, this single section will make Mansfield unique in the state, if not the country, as the most unethical town in America!!! In addition it will make regionalization of local ethics boards impossible.

Basically this section should cover the rules of disqualification in regards to voting. In the four years of attending council meetings I have only seen one current councilor excuse himself from discussions, and rightfully so. Kudos to councilor Shapiro. But as evidenced by the revised ethics code, condemnation to the Personnel Committee, the town attorney, and the assistant town manager for providing this extremely flawed ordinance for your approval. The purpose of an Ethics Code is to instill in the public eye the confidence of good government in the town and this revision certainly does NOT accomplish this and is an injustice to the public.

July 11, 2011

To: Town Council  
From: Betty Wassmundt

1. At the last meeting, Ms. Keane requested information on the location of the electric car charging station and was told it will be located in the parking lot of the Town Hall campus. 1. Please define the Town Hall campus for me. 2. Who will pay for the electricity used to charge these cars?

2. I sent the following email to Mr Shapiro. I would like answers to my questions.

Dear Councilor Shapiro:

At the last council meeting you appointed James Raynor to the Ethics Board with a term to expire on June 30, 2013 and you appointed Mr. De Wolf to said Board with a term to expire on June 30, 2014.

At the last meeting of the Committee on Committees Mary Stanton was asked by Meredith Lindsey about appointments to said Board and she stated that appointments were effective when the Council made them and were effective for 3 years.

How do you reconcile making the two appointments as noted above with differing termination dates?

How do you justify requiring termination dates on June 30th when this is not a condition provided for in the Ethics Code?

How do you justify filling a vacancy for the remainder of that person's term when the Code of Ethics states clearly that all appointments shall be for 3 years?

I will appreciate hearing from you.

Betty Wassmundt

3. I request that you reinstitute Council Office Hours immediately so that the public may have some chance to get an answer to a question. As it now stands, a member of the public can ask a question and it just goes into the great Mansfield abyss and is ignored.

Thank you.