REGULAR MEETING – MANSFIELD TOWN COUNCIL
February 8, 2016 Adjourned to February 9, 2016

Mayor Paul M. Shapiro called the regular meeting of the Mansfield Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chamber of the Audrey P. Beck Building.

I. ROLL CALL
Present: Kochenburger, Marcellino, Moran, Raymond, Ryan, Sargent, Shaiken, Shapiro
Excused: Kegler

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
Mr. Ryan moved and Mr. Shaiken seconded to approve the minutes of the January 25, 2016 meeting as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

III. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL
Mayor Shapiro requested that due to time restraints, the public comment period be recessed at 7:30 in order to hear from our State Legislators.
Betty Wexler, Codfish Falls Road, commented on her request that the wheelchair accessible van be made available one day a month for transporting residents of the Mansfield Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation (MCNR) to medical appointments. Ms. Wexler asked the Council to see if the regulations for the grant which provided funds for the van are being followed. (Statement attached)
Shirley Katz, Eastwood Road resident and member of the Zoning Board of Appeals and Democratic Town Committee, described how access to the van would allow her husband to visit his dentist and physician. Ms. Katz relayed her experiences with private van services. (Statement attached)
Sandy Burgess, Chaplin resident and MCNR employee, stated that one of her responsibilities is arranging transportation for residents. Ms. Burgess provided a short history of the lack of transportation available to the residents of the facility.
Jane Blanshard, Sycamore Drive, spoke in favor of Ms. Wexler's request and asked the Council to explore ways to increase transportation services for all senior citizens.
Stacey Estrella, South Bedlam Road resident and MCNR recreation director, explained how difficult it is to secure transportation for outings for residents. Ms. Estrella noted that the residents of MCNR are part of the Mansfield community.
Howard Raphaelson, Timber Drive resident and member of the Recreation Advisory Committee, asked the Council to revisit the fee waiver program and the effect it has on the Parks and Recreation budget. Mr. Raphaelson asked if the funds for the Parks and Recreation Department run out will they be able to continue to operate. (Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee letter found in the February 8, 2016 packet)
Jason McGarry, South Eagleville Road, stated that this is his third appearance before the Council regarding the inherent dangers of the Rte. 32/ Rte. 275 intersection. Mr. McGarry urged the Town to take action. (Statement attached. Additional materials will be included in the February 22, 2016 packet.)
Public comments were temporarily suspended. Mayor Shapiro invited the Town's Legislative Representative to the table to discuss the upcoming session.
Public comments resumed at 8:03 p.m. Mayor Shapiro thanked the public for allowing the Legislators to speak.
Charles Naumec, Riverview Road, commented on the January 25, 2016 meeting minutes, discussed the January 6, 2016 letter from Town Attorney Kevin Deneen regarding the voting rights of non-tax paying UConn students living in University, and

asked that a detailed discussion of the PILOT program be undertaken. (Statement attached)
Sharry Goldman, Browns Road, expressed support for the transportation issue addressed in earlier public comments and requested the Town Council reevaluate the funding structure of the Community Center. Ms. Goldman noted the expansive array of offerings at the Center and her hope that the Town will support a budget capable of funding these offerings while keeping membership affordable. (Statement attached)
Martha Kelly, Bundy Lane resident and member of the Board of Education but speaking as a private citizen, expressed her opposition to imposing a tax on residential real estate transactions to support preservation. (Statement attached)
Marty Hirschorn, Davis Road, spoke in favor of additional public support for the Community Center; in opposition to the real estate conveyance tax for open space; and asked the Council to explore all options, including regionalization, in the review of police services.

IV. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER

In addition to his written report the Town Manager offered the following comments:

- A recommendation to add the subject of public transportation and accessible transportation to a future agenda
- A recommendation to invite the Regional School District #19 Building Committee to a future meeting
- Noting that a previous request that the DOT place guard rails at the Rte.275/ Rte.32 intersections was denied, the Traffic Authority will discuss submitting another request and will explore safety options used in other towns.

Council members requested that all aspects of transportation in Town be reviewed.
Mr. Ryan moved and Mr. Marcellino seconded to add Item 1a, Recommendation of the Ad hoc Committee on the Naming of Streets and Buildings, to the agenda.
The motion passed with all in favor except Ms. Raymond who abstained.

V. REPORTS AND COMMENTS OF COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Shapiro reported that he recently attended a CROG meeting at which the executive director of CCM offered a presentation on a program started last fall called BEST (Bring Every Stakeholder Together). This program brings a wide variety of municipal leaders from both parties together with interest groups of all kinds in an effort to find common ground and create avenues for future conversations.
The Mayor also expressed his admiration for the talents of EO Smith students as evidenced by their production of Mary Poppins.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

None

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1a. Recommendation of the Ad hoc Committee on the Naming of Streets and Buildings
Mr. Ryan moved and Mr. Shaiken seconded to change Elsie Marsh Drive to Elsie Marsh Way.
The motion passed unanimously.

1. Meeting with State Legislators
Senator Mae Flexer and Representatives Gregg Haddad and Linda Orange agreed that there will be a robust discussion regarding the budget and the Governor's proposed changes to the budget format with the use of block grants. Representative

Haddad discussed the reformed PILOT formulae, known as Senate Bill 1, and how it will affect the state grants allocated to Mansfield. Members discussed the PILOT funds and related spending caps, as well as the best uses for any additional money. Mayor Shapiro thanked the Legislators for their comments and continued work.

2. Questions re Student Voting and State PILOT
   Town Attorney Kevin Deneen spoke to voting rights and the ability to regulate voting rights within Constitutional, Federal and State requirements and interpretations. Attorney Deneen stated that durational requirements are not permitted and once a person is admitted as an elector they may vote in all election/referenda events. (A Town Attorney supplementary opinion has been added to the Town's website)
   The Town Manager reviewed the sweeping reforms to the PILOT program passed in the last legislative session which include a tiered system and more protections afforded to tier one towns of which Mansfield is expected to be one.

3. Responsible Growth and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Grant Application for Four Corners Sanitary Sewer Project
   Mr. Ryan moved and Ms. Raymond seconded, effective February 9, 2016, to authorize submission of the Mansfield Four Corners Sanitary Sewer Project in accordance with the Responsible Growth and Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Grant Request for applications and to authorize Matthew W. Hart, Town Manager, to execute the grant application and any other documents associated with administering the grant, if awarded, including any amendments thereto.
   Motion passed unanimously.

4. Successor Collective Bargaining Agreement for Firefighters, Local 4120
   Mr. Kochenburger moved and Ms. Moran seconded, effective February 9, 2016, to authorize the Town Manager to execute the proposed successor Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Mansfield and Local 4120, IAFF – Firefighters, which agreement shall enter into effect on July 1, 2014 and expire on June 30, 2017.
   Motion passed unanimously.

5. Quarterly Financial Statements Dated December 31, 2015
   Finance Chair Bill Ryan moved, effective February 9, 2016, to accept the Financial Statements dated December 31, 2015.
   Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. REPORTS OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Mr. Ryan, Chair of the Finance Committee, reported that the Committee discussed the fraud risk policy and the whistleblower policy.
Ms. Moran reported that the Personnel Committee has cancelled its February 2, 2016 meeting. The Ad hoc Committee on Police Services will meet at the Police Complex in Willimantic at 5:00 p.m. on February 11, 2016.

IX. DEPARTMENTAL AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

No comments offered.

X. PETITIONS, REQUESTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

6. Letters re: Ravine Road - Mr. Shaiken thanked the Town Manager and Public Works Department for their efforts to clear Ravine Road and commended the Public Works Director for his presentation.
7. L. Hilton (02/02/16)
8. B. Jessurun (01/25/16)
9. J. Sgro (02/04/16)
10. B. Wexler (01/12/16)
11. Conservation Commission re: Constitutional Amendment to Protect State Lands
12. Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee re: Fee Waiver Policy
13. P. Shapiro/J. Goodwin re: NEC Future Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement
14. Invitation: Gathering of Mansfield's Agricultural Community
15. Comptroller Lembo Projects $7.1 Million Deficit with Possibility of Further Revenue Erosion
16. CRCOG: Benefits of CRCOG Membership
17. Government Finance Officers Association re: distinguished Budget Presentation Award – Mr. Hart commended the Finance Director and Budget Team on the presentation of this prestigious award.
18. Mansfield Minute – February 2016

XI. FUTURE AGENDAS

The following items were identified for future agendas:

- Accessible transportation options for senior citizens and other residents
- Region 19 Building Proposal
- The next steps of NextGen including projected enrollment numbers

Ms. Moran moved and Mr. Shaiken seconded to move into executive session to discuss Personnel in accordance with CGS §1-200(6)(a), Town Manager Employment Agreement and to include Town Manager Matt Hart.
The motion passed unanimously.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Personnel in accordance with CGS §1-200(6)(a), Town Manager Employment Agreement
Present: Kochenburger, Marcellino, Moran, Raymond, Ryan, Sargent, Shaiken, Shapiro
Also Included: Town Manager Matt Hart

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

The Council reconvened in regular session. Mr. Shaiken moved and Mr. Kochenburger seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:58 p.m.
Motion passed unanimously.

Paul M. Shapiro, Mayor

Mary Stanton, Town Clerk

1/12/16

Paul Shapiro,Mayor
Audrey P Beck Municipal Building
4 South Eagleville Rd. Mansfield Ct. 06268i

Dear Mayor Shapiro :

As a volunteer driver for the town of Mansfield, I was delighted when in 2012 the town received a grant to purchase a wheelchair accessible van for the purpose of providing transportation for disabled/older citizens. Section 5301 of the Federal Transit Act states the purpose very clearly.

The purpose of this letter is to further my quest to make this van available, on a very limited basis, for Mansfield citizens presently residing at 100 Warren Circle (Mansfield Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation).These citizens would need to be transported for medical appointments at locations limited to within a ten mile radius of MCNR. Each resident would be accompanied by a Certified Nurse Aide. The request is to have the use of the van one day per month.

This is not a new request by me or by the administration of MCNR. The previous Director, Kathleen Sutherland, spoke to the Town Council in the past. I have spoken on this subject to the Town Manager, the former Mayor, former Deputy Mayor, Director of Social Services, Former Director of Senior Services, Head of Volunteer Driving and at least three other council members. I have received the following responses and will refrain from commenting on them.

Response 1. We will look into it. ?,
Response 2. Residents of MCNR are not citizens of Mansfield. ?
Response 3, No other community provides this type of service. ?
Response 4.The town does not have a qualified driver. ?
Response 5. If we provide such limited service, future requests will demand more. ?
Response 6. The liability costs for the town will increase.

As the town has wisely increased its recreation facilities (new playground and skateboard park) it would seem that insurance costs must have increased. Surely under the terms suggested, with an already insured van driver, the town could find the resources to provide transportation services which are sorely needed by MCNR ,a town tax paying non profit facility.

As a volunteer driver I received an instruction manual. Included was a statement that "no services will be provided to residents of MCNR". This may have satisfied the town of Mansfield's idea of service for the disabled/elderly. I find it totally without merit. Indeed, compliance with the grant legally includes van service for residents of MCNR. In addition, the van is grossly underused.

Most sincerely,

Betty F Wexler

cc.Matt Hart

Paul Shapiro, Mayor
Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
4 South Eagleville Rd., Mansfield, CT 06268

2/3/16

Dear Mayor Shapiro:

My husband Lewis and I have been citizens of Mansfield for 63 years. We built our home on 8 Eastwood Rd. in 1957 and have been dutifully paying the town our property taxes every year. We were pleased when the town purchased a wheelchair accessible van to provide transportation for disabled citizens. Lewis has Parkinson's disease which has affected his legs, he can't stand or walk; he is in a wheelchair all the time. He would use the town wheelchair van only 3 times a year to see his dentist on 1022 Storrs Rd. in March & August to get his teeth cleaned & checked. And in Oct. to see his doctor in Willimantic to get his eyes Examined.

Metro wheelchair Van is no longer in service. We used to pay them $100 to go only a few miles to see the dentist. We tried dial-a-ride last year and had a horrible experience with it. When Lew is away from MCNR he is unable to use the bathroom, he has to use a chair lift and the assistance of nuring aides. Lew is taken to the bathroom before the wheelchair van arrives. He and his aid waited a whole hour before the van arrived. The man got lost and he couldn't find 195 and MCNR. When Lew got to the dentist he was late for his appointment. The appointment took 1 hour The van was supposed to return when Lew was ready but the van took hours and it was after 4 pm before Lew retuned to MCNR. All this tike he was sitting in a wet diaper and sores developed on his bottom. Gianna Stebbins is a very experienced wheel Chair van driver. She has taken Lew to the dentist on time and then 1 hour later picked him up and taken him back to the MCNR.

Lew has provided a great sevice to the town as Professor of Physical Chemistry for 36 years at the University of Connecticut. His knowledge, lucid lecture style, and understated sence of humor won him the respect and admiration of a generation of students. He also enjoyed a distinguished research career in x-ray diffraction, crystal & molecular structure. He published 60 research papers with graduate & post doctoral students. As a student he was associated with two Nobel laureates, William Lipscomb at Minnesota and Linus Pauling at Cal Tech. Lew also served the Univercity with distinction as Acting Vice President for Graduate Education & Research & Dean of the Graduate School and later Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs. Lew was highly respected by administrators ans faculty for his sound judgement and clear sense of priorities. He was elected member of many search committee & elected repeatedly to the University Senate over 30 years. He was the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Senate 3 times. The town should be honored to provide senior center wheelchair van services 3 times a year to this wonderful person who is a longtime citizen who pays town taxes & provided services to the community.
Most sincerely, Shirley Katz

CC: Matthew W. Hart

To: Mayor Mr. Paul Shapiro

CC: State Senator Mae Flexer
State Representative Gregg Haddad
Deputy Major Mr. William Ryan
Town Manager Mr. Matthew Hart
Elected Officials of Mansfield
Residents of Mansfield
Students, faculty and staff of the University of Connecticut

From: Jason A. McGarry
Date: February8, 2016

Subject: Intersection of Route 275, 32.

My name is Jason McGarry and I am here tonight for the third time since October 15, 2013 concerning the same unresolved danger. The eminent danger that my family, neighbors, Mansfield residents, all persons connected to UCONN, and that all drivers face every day, the unsafe intersection of Route 275, 32.

Since the October 15th meeting, there have been six accidents, three of which damaged property, and would have resulted in loss of life if chance did not prevail. One vehicle was a drug dealer, whom flipped their vehicle onto my property. Crack cocaine, a weight scale, and various weapons were found. Four months later, a second vehicle was a young woman with three of her friends, whom after attending an off campus UCONN party, narrowly missed my house and crashed approximately 105 meters into my backyard. After police conducted a sobriety test on the driver in my driveway, it was found that she had a .1686 blood/alcohol level. This past Wednesday, February 3, 2016, a car crashed onto my neighbor's property. The car was moving so fast, it jumped a three foot bank, dislodged the street sign from the ground, and threw the sign and its post twenty feet from the car. If not for the sign, the car would have crashed into my neighbor's house. When I walked over to my neighbor's house just after the accident, she stated, "I never thought this would happen to me."

Since February 5th, 2004, per records from State of Connecticut Police Department Headquarters in Middletown, which have been given to you tonight, there have been 31 accidents at the intersection of route 275 and 32. I appreciate the town's attempts to resolve the problem through continued conversations, and the challenges of this being a town and State of Connecticut problem. During this time I also contacted both Representative Haddad and Flexer's offices, submitting a possible solution. The Town of West Hartford had a similar problem, and placed a steel cable fence, reflective turn signs, and trees at the town's expense for the safety of the driver's and the owner of the property. Unfortunately, Senator Representative Haddad's Aide stated, "there was nothing we can do," and Mr. Elash, State Senator Flexer's

Aide stated, ""We received the paperwork and reviewed it" back on August 22, 2015, that being the last communication.

It has been suggested to me that I buy boulders and place them on my property. The boulder's cost $2,500, money that I do not have, nor should I pay since this since this is not my problem to correct. Although the boulders may offer some protection for my family and property, they do not inform drivers of the dangers of the corner, intersection at large. I have also been told to move. Moving does not solve a problem; it just shifts it to another person. The fact of the matter is, when, terrible to know that this will occur, that someone will die because of a crash. This will be due to the fact that the Town, State of Connecticut DOT, and State Representatives are unable to make physical changes to inform and protect the person's whom live in this area, and drive through this intersection. If tonight's meeting becomes another continued conversation with no physical changes, and someone dies as result of inaction, all town and state parties whom had the knowledge, power, and civic duty to make the necessary changes to correct this problem, will be legally guilty and morally cursed to live with this for the rest of their lives.

At the last council meeting I spoke at, I brought my wife and four children to impress upon you the severity and urgency of this problem. Please, someone should not die in a vehicle crash in order to warrant a change. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Jason A. McGarry
458 South Eagleville Road

Fair Treatment of Mansfield Tax Payers

Presented by Charles R. Naumec
52 Riverview Road, Mansfield Center, CT.
860-450-1355
charles_r_naumec@sbcglobal.net

Town of Mansfield Town Council Meeting
February 9, 2016

January 25, 2016 Meeting Minutes

Stating that I "offered clarification" to my comments made at the January 11, 2016 meeting does not correct the recorded comments which is part of history. The corrected comments should be included in the amended minutes. Comments relative to the "Code of Ethics" and the definition of "on duty" for town officials are critical points.

May I suggest that an E-mail address and/or text number be provided so the public can comments on the draft of meeting minutes before they are approved by the Town Council.

Letter from Town Attorney Mr. K. M. Deneen to Mr. M. W. Hart, dated 1/6/2016 (In packet)

This letter identifies the current Connecticut General Statutes which allows non tax paying UConn students living in University housing to vote in the Town of Mansfield. These statutes define an elector and indicates which elections they may vote in. It did not indicate in which statute "including any budget meetings or budget or budget referenda" was specified. Also I did not see any rational for the $1000.00 taxable assessment requirement for a Town residence, not a Town registered voter, to vote at the open town meeting vs student voters that pay no taxes.

I believe my main point is being missed. As I stated in the last paragraph of my letter to the Secretary of the State, dated January 7, 2016, that all my letters be reviewed by the Legislation and Elections Administration Division attorney as was previously directed for one letter requested by the Director of Constituent Services from the secretary's office.

I believe the current Connecticut Statutes are not constitutionally acceptable. I referenced the US Constitution and the 15th and 24th Amendments in my rational.

I hoped that the elected official in and representing the Town of Mansfield would carry on this discussion with the Secretary of the State and State Government officials.

I am also interested in hearing the position of other tax paying residences of Mansfield during the previously requested Public Hearing on this subject.

CCM Government Relations & Research Document, Dated June 30, 2015 (In Packet pg. 100)

This document addresses the PILOT program as it is handled in the State FY 16 budget.

I am interested in hearing a detailed discussion of this subject tonight. I believe the new tiered system will begin in FY18. I believe the current reimbursement rates of 45% for state own property and 77% for college and hospital property stay in effect until then. With the new system (Tier One:42% college & hospital property and 32% state owned property) the funds allocated when Pilot funds account are insufficient varies between the college and hospital properties and state owned properties with state own properties getting a lesser percentage amount.

I would still like to know why there are two different reimbursement rates.

I have addressed the PILOT program concerns to the three members of the Mansfield state legislative delegation by including them as CC's on letters to the Secretary of the State and by a letter sent to them directly on October 6, 2015. It has been four months since that letter and I have not received a reply or acknowledgement. I would hope that elected officials would respond to those individuals that elected them.

Thank you,

Charles R. Naumec

Sharry L. Goldman
187 Browns Road
Storrs, CT 06268
sharrygoldman@gmail.com

February 8, 2016

To the Mansfield Town Council:

The idea of having a community center in Mansfield was raised more than twenty years ago. Over a period of the following two years or more, discussions were held in town about what it was that people wanted. Finally, on February 22 1999, the town council heard from a large number of residents about their goals for the center. I should note that there is only one member of that town council who is currently serving: Virginia Raymond.

As I reflect upon the minutes from that meeting, I am absolutely amazed at what has become of the original proposal. Yes, people wanted a pool and fitness center, but they wanted much more. They wanted a true community center: a place for people to gather and socialize and to feel part of their town at a time when there was really no center to the town, but rather a collection of small villages. It was ultimately decided that the town would use $4 million in Pequot funds and bond $2.5 million to build the community center. As far as operating the facility, it was agreed that the fitness and pool aspects would be operated by selling memberships to the facility, but that the public would have access to a variety of services not covered by membership.

The current brochure for the community center, lists an impressive selection of activities. Besides a wide variety of opportunities to improve one's physical fitness, there is an array of activates directed to mental, intellectual and social health. Some of these were offered previously by other town agencies or state agencies. In fact, the idea for the Mansfield Community Center originated when the University of Connecticut stopped offering access to their pool to the high school swim team and to community members for recreational swimming without expensive memberships. Beyond that, MCC now administers the Community School for the Arts. The adult education program for townspeople was once run by staff from the Mansfield Board of Education. The MCC staff now run those programs. After school and vacation child care programs formerly run at the schools are now run by MCC and located there. The center now offers "Mansfield Day" once a month where all residents have free access to all the facilities at the MCC. A special needs social club is offered twice a month. Drop in sports activities are available five days per week. The list goes on.

It is a tribute to Curt Vincente and his staff that the Mansfield Community Center has grown so far beyond our initial vision. They respond to requests for programs and services openly and creatively within their financial constraints. They have kept the financial strength of the center intact. But it comes at a cost. There are seven fewer full time staff working at MCC than when it opened in 2003. Only the most dedicated, energetic staff survive the rigors of working there, and they work with smiles on their faces. They are a remarkable team.

On Feb 22, 1999 the town council held a hearing on the proposed community center. I told the council that my primary goal was to have this center be affordable. I did not want it to be exclusive. Many of the people speaking at that hearing expressed the same goal. Besides that, in 1999 and until 2015, the town had a fee waiver program so people were not excluded from town programs by lack of means.

My concern is that the support provided by the town for the ever increasing activities and events provided to all citizens by the Mansfield Community Center has not increased appropriately in the 13 years that the center has been open. (* see funding history attached) I commend Curt and his staff for their amazing dedication, creativity and service. That said, they are not magicians. If we expect the members to fund all the programs we value but that don't generate revenue, the cost of membership will cease to be widely accessible. Beyond that, as the building ages, with heavy use, it seems unreasonable to expect maintenance and repair to be covered by memberships any more than I expect my 5 cent overdue fines to cover the cost of maintaining the public library's building.

Most Mansfield residents take advantage of programs and events at the Community Center, whether or not they are members. During hurricanes and blizzards, people come for hot showers, food and shelter. Students come for recreation after school. Citizens participate in Veteran's day events, Halloween parties, voting on Election Day, health fairs, and a list of activities too long to cover. And whether or not one is a member, every property owner benefits from the existence of the center. Realtors advertise properties as just one mile from the community center" or "just minutes from the community center". The MCC has been the envy of other towns. It is my hope that the town council will evaluate the programs offered at the Community Center and make sure the budget allows for the provision of these programs equitably so that memberships remain accessible and affordable and that the provision of services to the general public continues unimpeded. We do not want to kill the goose that laid the golden egg.

Town Budget Subsidy for Rec. Dept. since FY 2000-01

year	Total Town Budget Expenditures	Increase	percent change		Subsidy to Rec dept program	change	percent change
2000-01	28,822,290			Rec. dept historically rec'd town subsidies	76,005		
2001-02	30,203,530	1,381,240	4.79%		70,022	-5983	-7.87%
2002-03	31,466,180	1,262,650	4.18%		92,342	22,320	31.88%
2003-04	32,541,822	1,075,642	3.42%	*Comm Cntr opens Nov. 2003	41,930	(50,412)	-54.59%
2004-05	34,655,400	2,113,578	6.49%		186,474	144,544	344.73%
2005-06	37,647,650	2,992,250	8.63%		122,273	(64,201)	-34.43%
2006-07	38,839,680	1,192,030	3.17%		105,490	(16,783)	-13.73%
2007-08	41,567,340	2,727,660	7.02%	Dec. 2007 : onset of "Great Recession"	201,538	96,048	47.66%
2008-09	43,698,145	2,130,805	5.13%		75,000	(126,538)	-1.68717
2009-10	43,381,452	-316,693	-0.72%		75,000	-	0
2010-11	43,626,285	244,833	0.56%		75,000	-	0
2011-12	44,332,720	706,435	1.62%		75,000	-	0
2012-13	45,086,340	753,620	1.70%		75,000	-	0
2013-14	46,053,540	967,200	2.15%		75,000	-	0
2014-15	46,911,724	858,184	1.86%		75,000	-	0
2015-16	48,832,250	1,920,526	4.09%		75,000	-	0

Prepared by Sharry Goldman
January 2016

February 8, 2016

Town Council
Town of Mansfield
Four South Eagleville Road
Storrs, CT 06268

Council Members:

Subject: Proposed Legislation for a Municipal Option to Create a Local Conservation Fund

I speak tonight as a private citizen, not as a member of Mansfield's preK-8 Board of Education or its associated committees.

With interest I have read about Audubon CT's initiative to establish a permanent, reliable funding source to "replenish land conservation and stewardship efforts" in an effort to allow CT towns -- through a surcharge paid by buyers on residential real estate transactions -- to rescue expensive parcels of land within their respective jurisdictions from developers, as well as fund other preservation and public-land maintenance efforts. I support preservation; in fact, before my husband and I sold a parcel in Mansfield several years ago, we restricted the deed in perpetuity – rock walls must remain intact, architecture of buildings must be era-appropriate, and land cannot be divided. Our own house is a testament to our mission: recycled eighteenth-century materials abound.

However, I do not support a tax on residential real estate transactions to accomplish preservation and corresponding efforts. This is the sort of tax that neither sunsets nor diminishes. On auto-pilot, their nature is to silently creep higher; their etiology can become shrouded in mystery. Hotel and car-rental invoices brim with add-ons. Utility surcharges slip past 20% of carrier charges; a telephone excise tax enacted in 1898 to fund the Spanish-American War was partially repealed 108 years later. Tacked onto airline tickets are multiple taxes and surcharges. Because regulations require airlines to tie fuel charges to the actual cost of fuel, the name of the surcharge was recently changed to "carrier imposed charges"; these fees/taxes/surcharges can double the cost of a ticket.

If municipalities in CT were enticed by development and its ensuing tax revenues and did not encourage preservation through self-discipline or zoning, if their citizens did not responsibly allocate land for preservation, if towns did not pursue land conservation on their own dime, or if their citizens did not establish a private land trust, such as Joshua's Trust, that is truly unfortunate. But taxing the buyers' portion of residential property transactions is not the answer. Notably, in the materials, I do not find that commercial developers must set aside a portion of their land-consuming projects for preservation or contribute to conservation efforts. Many of them, along with their political chums, are agents of this travesty. In that vein, why should innocent homebuyers be subjected to footing the bill?

Thank you.

Martha Kelly

Martha Kelly
29 Bundy Lane
Storrs, CT 06268