

A newsletter about what's happening in your Town of Mansfield

VOL. 4, ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY-MARCH 2024

### Look for these stories in this newsletter



Presidential Primary  
April 2, or Vote Early  
(See page 6)



Return Revaluation  
Questionnaires  
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Get Free Tech Help  
with Digital Navigators  
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Taste 2 Towns Runs  
through Feb 11  
(See page 10)

## Message from the Town Manager Planning for a Year of Progress, Service, and Responsiveness

Greetings Fellow Residents!



I hope that everyone's New Year is off to a good start! As of this writing there is some fresh snow on the ground to remind us it is winter after all, but, it certainly has been a pretty mild winter thus far.

The Town of Mansfield has been busy on a number of different fronts at the beginning of 2024.

**Budget Planning Begins.** Since late-2023, the municipal management team has been developing an operating budget and capital improvement plan for FY 2024/25. This initial phase of the budget process culminates with the formulation of my official annual budget and capital project recommendations that will be initially presented to the Town Council on March 25 before proceeding to a number of budget workshops with the Town Council throughout the month of April. Just as with other budget years, a primary goal for the FY 2024/25 budget is maintaining the quality of Town programs, projects, and services while simultaneously promoting cost savings, leveraging revenues from the state and other "non-local" sources, and minimizing (or avoiding) any increases in the mill rate. We genuinely want to do everything possible to help ensure that Mansfield remains a community where people of all economic means can afford to live. Additional information about this year's budget process is included in a subsequent section of this newsletter.

**Moratorium on Development May be Extended.** The Planning and Zoning Commission has initiated a Zoning Regulation Text Amendment to extend the temporary and limited moratorium on new high-density housing developments to August 31, 2024. During this temporary and limited moratorium, new developments over five (5) total units or with an average density greater than three (3) units per acre shall be prohibited, and no applications shall be received by the Planning and Zoning Commission or Zoning Agent. A public hearing will be held on February 5, 2024 to hear comments regarding the moratorium.

**UConn Off-Campus and Commuter Student Service Office.** In recent weeks we met with UConn officials to receive updates relative to the university's plans to reestablish an Off-Campus and Commuter Student Services program, which will exist within the Office of the Dean of Students. We welcome this news, and are happy to share this update with our residents. Historically, this program has filled an incredibly valuable function. It has been the focus of important collaboration between the Town and UConn to promote public safety and help proactively address possible issues in residential neighborhoods.

I am happy to share that Mr. Nathan Fuerst, Vice President of Student Life and Enrollment at UConn, is assuming responsibilities to serve as the primary liaison with the Town of Mansfield. Given Mr. Fuerst occupies a senior leadership position within the President's cabinet and oversees matters related to Student Life, we believe that this will serve the Town of Mansfield well as we continue to work collaboratively with the university around various shared economic development goals.

### **Taste 2 Towns: Mansfield-Windham Restaurant Week.**

Beginning January 29 and extending through February 11, local residents and visitors can enjoy special menus and offers at 24 participating restaurants during the special two-week event known as Taste 2 Towns. Participating 2024 restaurants and their promotional menus are listed at [taste2towns.com](https://taste2towns.com). Taste 2 Towns is a collaborative effort by the



(Continued)



**(Town Manager’s Message cont.)**

Mansfield Downtown Partnership, Willimantic Downtown Neighborhood Association, Town of Mansfield, and Town of Windham to highlight the many wonderful, diverse dining options in our region. Taste 2 Towns is made possible with the generous support of local sponsors, including “Main Course” presenting sponsor Green Valley Tree, LLC. Participating Mansfield businesses include: Coyote Flaco, Dog Lane Café, Fenton River Grille, Gansett Wraps, Haven Hot Chicken, Hops 44, Kathmandu Kitchen & Bar, Little Aladdin Mediterranean Grill, Nautical Bowls, Playa Bowls, Square Peg Pizzeria, and TaCo. *Bon appétit!*

**Honoring Mansfield’s Vietnam-Era War Veterans.**

Staff for Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz has been coordinating efforts with Town officials to host a recognition event for surviving Vietnam-era war Veterans, held on the evening of January 29, 2024. The Town Clerk’s Office prepared a list of approximately 120 known veterans who reside in Mansfield who were mailed personal invitations. We welcome the opportunity to recognize and celebrate these veterans, and are grateful that Lt. Governor Bysiewicz and Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Ronald Welch celebrated those in Mansfield who served. (See story on page 9)



**Maple Festival is Coming to Mansfield!**

Mansfield will be the host site for a major regional event known as Eastern Connecticut Maple Festival being organized by the Windham Chamber of Commerce. This event had been held in Hebron for a number of years, growing to attract thousands of visitors, but this past year local officials in Hebron decided they wanted to scale back the scope of their event. Therefore the Windham Chamber of Commerce is organizing the festival to be celebrated here.



The event in Mansfield will take place over a two-day period, Saturday and Sunday, March 9 and 10. Several location options have been considered, but event organizers are currently exploring viability of a location close to the Downtown area. A final decision about the event location is expected in the very near future. Local clubs and organizations plus businesses are encouraged to register to be part of the Maple Fest as a fundraising or outreach opportunity with potentially thousands of visitors. Watch for the details.

**Mansfield Parks and Recreation Master Planning.**

Town staff continue to work closely with 110%, Inc., a consultant, to finalize a complete working draft of the Mansfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Financial Sustainability Strategy. Once finalized later this winter, it will of course ultimately be presented to the Town Council for review and feedback before proceeding with adoption. At this time, we anticipate that the consultant will be completing additional site visits to meet with stakeholders during the month of February. This has been a very important project for our community, as providing our residents and visitors access to a diverse array of active and passive recreational programs/assets is a cornerstone of Mansfield’s values and identity. Please stay tuned for additional details.

Finally, if you have friends or family who may be interested in receiving this electronic newsletter, but may not yet be subscribed, please forward a copy of this newsletter to them. And, remember, subscribing to receive the newsletter, and other updates from your town, is easy to do. (See box to the right.)

Please do not hesitate to contact the Town Manager’s Office, 860-429-3336 or [townmanager@mansfieldct.org](mailto:townmanager@mansfieldct.org), if you have constructive feedback on how the depth and breadth of information provided in the newsletter can be optimized to meet the needs of our residents.

**Subscribing to the electronic newsletter is easy and straightforward. Simply:**

- Go to this page on the town’s website: <http://mansfieldct.gov/list.aspx>
- Enter your email address in the “Email Address” field
- Under the “Notify Me” section of the page check the box for “News & Press Releases”

Look for an automated email informing you that your email address has been added to the distribution list, then confirm your account. That’s it!

Please stay safe on the roads in this final seven weeks of winter, and enjoy the snow when it falls!

Very respectfully,

Ryan J. Aylesworth

### Important Updates from the Office of the Assessor



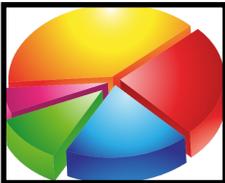
**Watch for Assessment Increase Notices.** The October 1, 2023 Assessment increase notices for Real Estate and Personal Property are being mailed February 1, 2024. No action on your part is required unless, however, Mansfield Property owners are encouraged to contact the Assessor’s office for clarification, if they have any questions or concerns pertaining to the notices, as the values contained therein will reflect on the July 1, 2024 tax bills.

**Assessment Appeals Forms Due February 20.** Pursuant to the Provisions of Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 12-111, Written Appeal Petition forms are due to the Board of Assessment Appeals, who meet in March, by February 20, 2024 for property owners wishing to schedule an Appeal Hearing before them. Appeal applications will be available on the [Board of Assessment Appeals page](#) of the Town website on or before February 1, 2024.

**File Income and Expense Forms.** Commercial Property owners should be on the lookout for 2023 Income and Expense Forms to be mailed to them this month, as well. There will be a portal available to file the forms electronically as there was last year. All forms are due to the Assessor by June 1, 2024 to avoid late or non-filing assessment penalties.

**Tax Credit and Veterans Relief Programs.** The time period for filing new or biennial applications for Income-based, Elderly and/or Totally Disabled Homeowner’s Tax Credits and Additional Veterans’ Programs begins February 1, 2024. The Income Limits for calendar year 2023 are maximum \$53,400 per married couple and \$43,800 single applicant. The Assessor’s office is mailing reminder letters and blank application forms to property owners due to refile their biennial applications. This year, as in previous years, the Mansfield Department of Human Services will be doing the intake of these applications. Due to scheduling requirements which prevent them from being able to take walk-in applicants, they kindly request you call the Department of Human Services at 860-487-9873 to schedule an appointment.

### Participate in the Fiscal Year 2024/25 Budget Development Process



The municipal budget development process commenced in late 2023, and it is important to underscore the vital role citizen engagement plays in sculpting the financial trajectory of our community. The budget is a reflection of our shared goals and aspirations, and public involvement is instrumental in ensuring that it resonates with the diverse needs and values of our town.

Accessibility is a core tenet of our approach to the budget development process. We are committed to making pertinent information readily available to you. Clear, accessible details about revenue sources, expenditure plans, and the considerations guiding our financial decisions will be provided to foster an informed and engaged community.

Cost-effectiveness remains a guiding principle in the Town’s budgetary decisions. We seek to optimize the allocation of resources, ensuring efficiency in addressing the ever-evolving needs of our community. Your insights are invaluable in striking the right balance between fiscal responsibility and delivering high-quality services that meet the expectations of our residents. Likewise, we always strive to identify and pursue grants, and other alternative revenue sources, that enable us to fund new programs and projects without having to collect additional tax dollars.

Innovation is a driving force in our commitment to creating a budget that aligns with the Town Council’s goals and the values cherished by our community. We actively explore inventive solutions and new approaches to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of our municipal services. Your ideas and suggestions are crucial in navigating the dynamic landscape of municipal governance.

Your engagement is not just welcomed; it’s actively encouraged. There will be considerable opportunities for you to participate in Town Council budget workshops (all of which are open and accessible to the general public) during the month of April, and subsequently share perspectives on regarding essential services, infrastructure projects, innovative community programs, and other proposals that will shape the future of Mansfield. *(Find key budget workshop dates on page 4).*

Our budgetary decisions are deeply rooted in the goals set by the Town Council and the values that define our community. By actively participating in the budget development process, you contribute to achieving outcomes that align with these goals and reflect the unique character of the Town of Mansfield.

Stay informed about upcoming events related to the budget development process and seize the chance to make your voice heard. Together, we can craft a budget that not only aligns with the Town Council’s stated goals but also embodies the innovative spirit and values of Mansfield.

**2024/25 Budget Review and Calendar Adoption Schedule**



The Town’s budget schedule is provided below. All meetings may be attended in-person, or watch the live-stream virtually from your home:

<https://www.mansfieldct.gov/2062/Livestream-of-Meetings>

Copies of all the presentations and budget-in-progress versions will be posted to the Budget page of our website:

<https://www.mansfieldct.gov/169/Budget-Information>

Date/Time	Purpose	Location
March 25 Monday 7:00 PM	<b>Budget Presentation</b> Message, Budget in Brief, Guide to Budget, Revenue and Expenditure Summaries	Council Chambers Audrey Beck Building (Town Hall)
March 28 Thursday 6:00 PM	<b>Public Information Session</b> Town Manager’s Budget	Council Chambers
April 1 Monday 6:00 PM	<b>Budget Review-General Fund and Capital:</b> General Government, Public Safety, Community Services, Community Development, Town-wide, Operating Transfers, Parks & Rec Fund, Mansfield Discovery Depot, Other Operating Fund	Council Chambers
April 4 Thursday 6:00 PM	<b>Budget Review-General Fund and Capital:</b> Public Works, Other funds: Town Aid, Sewer Operating, Solid Waste Fund, Transit Services, Debt Service, Health Insurance, Workers’ Comp, and Cemetery Fund. Other agencies: Eastern Highlands Health District and Mansfield Downtown Partnership	Council Chambers
April 8 Monday, 7:00 PM	<b>Public Hearing on Budget at Regular Council Meeting</b>	Council Chambers
April 10 Tuesday 6:30 PM	<b>Budget Review-General Fund and Capital: Board of Education, Shared Facilities Management, Shared Finance, Shared Information Technology &amp; Management Services Fund</b>	Council Chambers
April 15-19	<b>School Vacation Week</b>	
April 22 Monday, 6:00 PM	<b>Budget Discussion</b> (for flagged items and discussions) Special Meeting prior to regular Town Council meeting	Council Chambers
April 25 Monday 6:00 PM	<b>Budget Discussion and Adoption of Budget</b>	Council Chambers
April 29 Monday 6:00 PM	<b>Adoption of Budget</b> (meeting held if necessary)	Council Chambers
May 6 Monday, 7:00 PM	<b>Region 19 Annual Meeting on Budget</b>	E.O. Smith High School Media Center
May 7 Tuesday	<b>Region 19 Budget Referendum</b> for Ashford, Mansfield, Willington voters	Polling Places
May 9 Thursday 6:00 PM	<b>Public Information Session</b> Town Council Adopted Budget	Council Chambers
May 14 Tuesday 7:00 PM	<b>Annual Town Meeting</b>	Mansfield Middle School Auditorium

**Mansfield’s Digital Navigators Can Assist You with Technology Use**



Do you need technology assistance? Have an issue with your laptop, or a new device that needs to be set up? The Mansfield Public Library’s Digital Navigators are here to help!

Through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) grant funds, the Town of Mansfield has established positions to help fill an increasing need among residents. Digital Navigators John Cropp and Paul Velazquez (*photo below*) can assist in

the following areas to help you develop your technology skills:

- Optimizing Microsoft Office resources
  - Google tools
  - Computer, tablet and smartphone basics
  - Password resetting and establishing accounts online
  - Internet browsers
  - Social media
  - Amazon
  - Town and government online services
- And much more!



Where will they help you? This isn’t just an over-the-phone service! The Digital Navigators can meet you at a convenient location in public areas around Town, at Town of Mansfield facilities, and at the Mansfield Public Library. Watch for announcements of special pop-up events, too, where you know they will be.

Residents of any town can receive help with their tech device if they visit the Mansfield Public Library, but offsite visits are strictly limited to Mansfield, CT residents. At-home visits are not permitted through this program.

To book an appointment, just call or text: 959-444-1305 or e-mail [DigitalNavigators@mansfieldct.org](mailto:DigitalNavigators@mansfieldct.org)



**Improved Assistive Listening Devices Available in Council Chambers**



In an effort to better serve our residents and support engagement with public meetings, the Town of Mansfield has upgraded its technology to support those with hearing challenges who attend in-person meetings at the Town Hall’s Council Chambers.

Technology and quality has progressed since the Town originally installed equipment. Four new devices have been purchased for the public to use during public meetings. Look for the box of the Assistive Listening devices as you enter the room, or ask the staff person administering your meeting to locate it for you. The small device plugs into headphones, which are also provided, and allows people to adjust the sound to their own needs through the headphones. We also provide a box of optional disposable paper headphone covers in the box to insert over the headphones to keep them sanitary.

These devices enhance the voices in the room, as well as any participants who are participating remotely through our Zoom application, so users shouldn’t miss any conversation or discussion. Please reach out to the on-site staff if you have any issues using this new supportive technology.

**Our Senior Center Newsletter has a \*new\* look!**

Check out our newly revamped “Senior Sparks” and all the great programs we have going on in February. [Click here.](#)

Hope you will consider joining us for a UCONN Tailgate Party on February 11th or a Leap Year Celebration on February 29<sup>th</sup>!



### Presidential Preference Primary Election Tuesday, April 2; Early Voting Options Available to Voters for the First Time.



Primary season is coming in Connecticut!

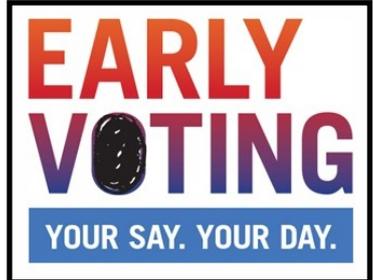
The Presidential Preference Primary Election Day is Tuesday, April 2 from 6 AM to 8 PM at one of four designated polling places around Mansfield. ([Find your polling place.](#))

But due to the change in State law, this year Connecticut's voters can choose to participate in Early Voting. The Mansfield Registrars of Voters have announced this schedule for Early Voting in Mansfield which offers four additional days to vote if April 2 is not convenient for you:

#### Tuesday, March 26 to Thursday, March 28 and Saturday, March 30

From 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM **at Town Council Chambers only.** Audrey B. Beck Municipal Offices, 4 So. Eagleville Road, Mansfield

[Learn more about Early Voting](#) from the Secretary of the State's website.



#### Registration Deadlines:

A voter **must be registered in a party** to vote in that party's primary—Unaffiliated Voters may not participate. Deadlines to enroll in a party in order to vote in the 2024 Presidential Preference Primary:

#### New Voters

March 15: Mail-in and Online – Must be postmarked or received by the Registrars

March 26, 27, 28, 30: 12 Noon on the day before you wish to vote. **Note: This means a person can register on one of those days, but cannot vote until the next subsequent day**

April 1, 12 noon: In-person

#### Unaffiliated Voters

March 15: Mail-in and Online – **Must be received, not just postmarked,** by the Registrars

March 25, 12 Noon: In order to vote during the early voting period

April 1, 12 Noon: in-person

The difference between the deadlines for new voters and unaffiliated voters is:

- Unaffiliated cannot change to a party during the early voting period, they must do it by noon on the day before the early voting period.
- Unaffiliated mail-in and online registrations must be received, not just postmarked by the deadline.

#### Mark Your Calendar for Upcoming Elections:

##### Primary Election August 13, 2024

This year this will include seven days of Early Voting opportunities leading up to the Primary Election day.

##### General Election November 5, 2024

This year there will be 14 days of Early Voting opportunities leading up to the General Election day.

If you have questions, please contact the [Registrars of Voters](#).

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#### How Are We Doing? There are Lots of Ways to Let Us Know!



The Town of Mansfield is committed to excellence in service. How are we doing? Please give us feedback now by replying through [this form](#).

The Town Manager's Office has also placed suggestion boxes at locations around town including the Senior Center, the Mansfield Public Library and Library Express, and at the Mansfield Community Center. You can either access the input form through the QR code, or fill out the card and drop it in the box. Or just call us at 860.429.3336.

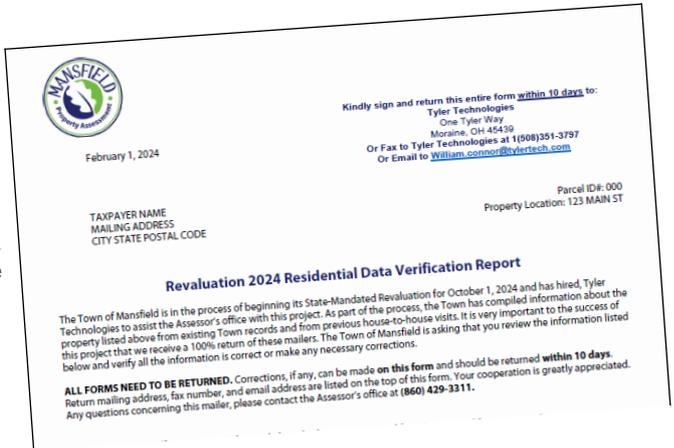
We want to hear how we can better serve our residents!

Property Owners Urged to Return Mailers about Revaluation



The Town of Mansfield is initiating the October 1, 2024 Town-Wide Revaluation this month. Mansfield Residential Property owners can expect Residential Data Verification Report mailers to arrive in their mailboxes in early February 2024. (see sample below) It is crucial for the success of this project that we receive a 100% return of these mailers.

The Town of Mansfield kindly requests that you review the information provided on the forms and verify the accuracy of all data. If there are any discrepancies with the property description or features, please make a note on the form indicating the necessary corrections. Regardless of whether changes are needed or not, please sign and return the form. This step is critical in the assessment process, as accurate data ensures the most precise valuation of your property.



In addition to the data mailers, property owners should be aware that our data collectors will commence their work immediately. They will conduct building permit inspections, examine recently sold properties, perform field reviews, and capture updated photos. Data collectors may also pose several questions to residents or occupants about a property. The goal is to gather comprehensive information about each property, enabling our teams to accurately calculate the value of every parcel. This process is expected to continue through November 2024.

**What is Revaluation?**  
In this context, "Revaluation" or "revalue" refers to determining the present true and actual value of all real property in a town as of a specific assessment date. This involves the systematic appraisal of groups of properties on that date, employing standardized procedures and statistical testing. The primary objective of Revaluation is to rectify any assessment inequities that may have arisen since the last revaluation, ensuring a fair distribution of the local tax burden.

Once all data mailers are returned and reviewed, and all other relevant information is collected, Tyler Technologies will collaborate with the Assessor to analyze the data. Valuation conclusions will be established and tested against acceptable technical standards. Mansfield property owners can anticipate receiving their tentative assessment notices in November 2024. Property owners interested in scheduling an informal review of their tentative values with Tyler Technologies should follow the instructions provided on their notice.

For more information, please download our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document and check the special website created for Mansfield's Revaluation project. Key dates, along with pictures of the data collectors, will be uploaded to this website. If you have questions about whether a data collector is in your area, please feel free to call the Mansfield Town Assessor at (860) 429-3311 or email: [assessor@mansfieldct.org](mailto:assessor@mansfieldct.org).

Nominate a Local Food Champion: Nomination Period Opening Soon!



Do you know someone in our community who is a real champion for local food? Is there a farmer you rely on for fresh produce? Does your friend next door teach the neighborhood about bee keeping or gardening? Maybe you know a shop owner who sells your favorite locally produced foods. We want to hear about them!

The Taste of Mansfield, in partnership with the Mansfield Economic Development Commission and the Mansfield Agriculture Committee, invite you to submit nominations for the third annual Taste of Mansfield Champion Awards, recognizing the producers, educators, and sellers who advocate and promote the benefits of local food and agriculture within our community.

The nomination period for 2024 will be opening soon, and it's your chance to shine the spotlight on folks you observe advocating for agriculture and equitable access to fresh, local foods right here in Mansfield. Please visit [www.tasteofmansfield.org](http://www.tasteofmansfield.org) to learn more about the program, to read about former winners, and to complete the simple nomination form.

### Our Valued Resources: Mansfield’s Parks and Recreation Master Planning and Financial Sustainability Strategy Work Concluding



Mansfield Parks and Recreation’s hired consultant group, 110%, Inc., continue to work on finalizing a working draft of the Mansfield Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Financial Sustainability Strategy. Key areas of focus over the past year have included community feedback and engagement, meeting with staff and key stakeholders, demographic analysis, recreation services analysis, financial strategy analysis, American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, and assessment of parks, trails, and open spaces.

Expected to be finalized later this winter, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Financial Sustainability Strategy will ultimately be presented to the Town Council for review and feedback before proceeding with adoption. Anticipated outcomes from the study will include an objective overview of the Mansfield parks and recreation system, community engagement results, key issues and insights, local and national trends and influences, recommended priorities, action steps, and a phased implementation plan for the Town to roll out immediately and continuing over the next ten years.

Consultant 110% Inc. will conduct a site visit in February, focusing primarily on additional park assessment work and meeting with staff and other stakeholders.

The Parks and Recreation Master Planning is one of three initiatives the Town is undertaking as a lead-up to updating its Plan of Conservation and Development. To learn more about Mansfield Tomorrow Planning initiatives, please visit [www.mansfieldtomorrow.org](http://www.mansfieldtomorrow.org)



### Don’t Miss Out on All the Fun in Downtown Storrs!

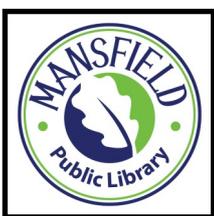


There’s tons of fun happening year-round in Downtown Storrs! Visit [downtown-storrs.org](http://downtown-storrs.org) to check out our event calendar with arts, athletics, dining, and more.

Or, get events info delivered right to your inbox! The [Mansfield Downtown Partnership](http://Mansfield Downtown Partnership) sends out a semi-weekly email highlighting upcoming events in Downtown Storrs.

Sign up to receive the eblasts at [downtownstorrs.org/connect](http://downtownstorrs.org/connect) today!

### Mansfield Public Library’s Seed Library is opening for the season on March 1<sup>st</sup>!



Mansfield Public Library aims to nurture a thriving community of gardeners and seed savers. As a partner in the Taste of Mansfield, we want to help connect the community through local food! Therefore, we hope to help support gardeners, from beginner to expert, through the process of growing and harvesting.

**Check out our Seed Library.** Experiment with planting seeds. We encourage our community to dig in and garden, use our varied resources to learn how to grow and harvest, and enjoy a culture of sharing and abundance.

Starting March 1, stop in and have a look, “borrow” some seeds, grab a brochure and helpful handouts and get started with a love for gardening. (Need a tool you don’t have? Check out what we have in our free Tool Lending Library, too!)



**Learn to Garden from a Local Farmer!** Mansfield Public Library is hosting a free workshop, “Gardening Basics” on February 13 from 6:00-7:30 PM. Join Chaplin farmer Kelly Caisse from KDCROP Farms as she guides you into the basics of starting, tending, and harvesting from your garden in 2024! Learn about starting your own seeds, conditioning plants to the garden, organic gardening techniques, and more! Come with your questions!!

### Northwest Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan Progressing



Planning and Development Staff are working with FHI Studio to review survey data as well as feedback received during the public workshops and focus groups. The next steps include the development of the Plan vision, draft plan recommendations, and design concepts. A draft plan will be presented to the public this spring. Progress on the plan is available at [www.mansfieldtomorrow.org/nw-neighborhood-plan](http://www.mansfieldtomorrow.org/nw-neighborhood-plan)

## SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS NORTHWEST OF UCONN

Four Corners, Hunting Lodge Road, Cedar Swamp Road, Timber Drive, Separatist Road and Beyond!

**Northwest Mansfield is evolving.** Recent changes such as the closure of the Goodwin Elementary School, mixed-use and multifamily development activity, and the gradual conversion of single-family homes to rental units, disrupting the owner occupancy-rental balance, have prompted the need for the Town to **engage the community in a discussion about the future of this area.**

The Northwest Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan will establish a roadmap to assist in **managing growth and guide development** in this corner of Mansfield. More specifically, the project will result in a plan for Northwest Mansfield that will be used to:

- Assist the Town with updating its zoning regulations for the area
- Improve pedestrian and bicyclist access and safety
- Improve traffic operations and safety
- Protect open space areas and environmental resources
- Assist in determining the future of Goodwin Elementary School



Visit the Project Website to learn more: [www.mansfieldtomorrow.org/nw-neighborhood-plan/](http://www.mansfieldtomorrow.org/nw-neighborhood-plan/)

### Lieutenant Governor and Veterans Affairs Commissioner Honor Mansfield Veterans at Special Ceremony



Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz and Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner Ronald Welch hosted a special Veterans Awards Ceremony for Mansfield's Vietnam-era Veterans at the Mansfield Middle School Auditorium on January 29.

Coventry-Mansfield American Legion Post 52 members served as Color Guard, and members of the E.O. Smith High School Chamber Chorus performed the National Anthem. Senator Mae Flexer, State Rep. Gregg Haddad, State Rep. Pat Boyd, Mayor Moran, and several members of the Mansfield Town Council also attended to honor these men and women.

A highlight of the ceremony was when Lt. Governor Bysiewicz invited those attending to share their stories of service. Providing these Veterans the opportunity to tell their stories in this intimate setting made this event especially personal. Each Veteran was presented with a certificate and a pin. Photos of the Veterans in attendance receiving their awards can be seen at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/lgsusanb/albums/72177720314483068>



To assist the Lt. Governor's staff in organizing this event, the Town Clerk's office and Town Manager's office collaborated in identifying a list of registered Veterans from the Vietnam-era, and mailed personal invitations to 120 eligible individuals. The Lt. Governor has organized a series of these ceremonies across the State.

## Taste 2 Towns Promotes Region's Diverse, Vibrant Restaurant Culture



From chef-driven full-service establishments to beloved counter-service favorites, restaurants in Windham and Mansfield are pleasing every palate during Restaurant Week, two weeks of delicious known as Taste 2 Towns January 29 through Sunday, February 11, 2024.

Participating restaurants have posted their menu offerings for visitors to preview at [Taste2Towns.com](https://Taste2Towns.com). The Towns of Mansfield and Windham have joined up with the Mansfield Downtown Partnership and Willimantic Downtown Neighborhood Association (WDNA) to collaborate on the third year of this popular promotion. An unprecedented 24 local eateries are offering special menus this year!

The diverse participating restaurants mean there's something for everyone, from special items as low as \$10 up to multi-course offerings for a single price of \$35-45, known as *prix-fixe*. If dining out is not convenient, customers can enjoy the event at home with many venues offering creative take-out only dishes designed for Taste 2 Towns. The promotion includes breakfast, lunch and/or dinner menus.

Andy Gütt, President of the Willimantic Downtown Neighborhood Association and owner of Stone Row Kitchen and Bar in Willimantic is one of the lead organizers of the Taste 2 Towns experience. His restaurant, Stone Row Kitchen + Bar, was recently named 2023 Restaurant of the Year for Windham County, and he is a firm believer in dining establishments as a major economic driver.

"The first year of Taste 2 Towns, we planted the seed. In the second year, the idea began to grow. This year, our third year, Taste 2 Towns Restaurant Week celebrates a regional food scene that's leaped into full bloom in this Leap Year," says Gutt.

He continues, "By exploring the menus and offerings through the website, [Taste2Towns.com](https://Taste2Towns.com), neighbors and destination diners from outside our region will find exciting new taste experiences."

Both Windham and Mansfield have seen a number of new restaurants lift off in recent months. "We know these new destinations are eager to welcome in customers, and have jumped on board with this event. With Taste 2 Towns, there is such a wide variety of restaurants and cuisines involved," says Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership who coordinates economic development initiatives for the Town of Mansfield.

She adds, "The community steps up to sponsor this event on behalf of our restaurants, too. Restaurants drive economic vitality. Finding a new favorite dining spot generates a lot of excitement among friends and families. This is the best way to find that new favorite in the new year," she adds.

The Taste 2 Towns Kick-Off Bash for the promotion invited chefs, restaurateurs, and sponsors to meet each other and be celebrated for committing to this business-boosting initiative. Among special guests, the Chairman of the Connecticut Restaurant Association's Board of Directors Keith Beaulieu joined Green Valley Hospitality group members at the event (*photo right*.)



News of Taste 2 Towns was distributed throughout the region. Media including television, radio and food press picked up the news about this popular promotion.

Taste 2 Towns is a great way to try new dining experiences and to explore the region's specialties with friends. Find your delicious at one of these wonderful food establishments:

Coyote Flaco, Dog Lane Café, Fenton River Grill, Gansett Wraps, Haven Hot Chicken, Hops 44, Kathmandu Kitchen, Little Aladdin Mediterranean Grill, Nautical Bowls, Playa Bowls, Square Peg Pizzeria, TaCO, A Cupcake for Later, Fairways Bar & Grill, The Fish Market, Harp on Church, Limberia Tropical Algaete, Stone Row Kitchen + Bar, Willimantic Brewing Company/Main Street Café, Blondie's Diner, Pho Delight Thai Restaurant, Grounded Coffee Company, Paul and Jane Boba Café, and Trigo Wood Fired Pizza.

Also critical to the success of this program is the involvement of local sponsors: Chef's Table Presenting Sponsor: Green Valley Tree Service; Main Course Sponsors: Coyote Flaco, Dog Lane Café, Fairways Bar Grill Patio, Fenton River Grill, and Green Valley Hospitality; Grab & Go Sponsors: Casella, Crane Hill Contracting, D'Ellia Auctions, Dietrich Construction, Home Selling Team, Northeastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, State Farm, Westford Hill Distillers and the Willimantic Food Co-op; By the Bite Sponsors: CLICK Inc., The Hoot, Hosmer Mountain Soda Co., Kerri Art Studio & Gallery. Meehan & Daughters. Willimantic Brewing Company, Willimantic Renaissance Inc., The Windham Theater Guild, YONO Yoga and Meditation, and Zlotnick Construction.

### Black Plastic Containers Require Special Care: What to Recycle



Recycling: It was supposed to be so easy!

If we were just diligent enough about recycling, we would have a perfect loop. We would solve the plastics problem and assuage our guilt! And weren't plastics just melted down and remixed - just like elementary students melting their crayons on the classroom radiators?

It turns out that recycling plastic is complicated and fraught with perils. The critical number stamped on plastic products is the Resin Identification Number or RIN. The RIN system runs from 1-7. Loosely, the RIN indicates the structure of the plastic. The RIN was never intended to instruct residents on what to recycle, rather it was intended as a communication to processors. There are end markets for certain types of plastics but black plastics cannot be recycled at all!

Alas, black plastic is cheap, and when used for takeout containers, makes for an undeniably dramatic presentation. It gets rejected, however, by the near-infrared scanners used at MRF (materials recovery facilities). By including black plastic in the recycle cart, one more "trash" item needs to be pulled out of the recycle load. More sorting at the recycle facility translates into increased cost for recycling.



We should not be discouraged, however. Recycling is worth it!

What to do? Reuse your black plastic trays as long as you can, but more important, resolve to wean yourself off an overreliance on single-use plastics.

Want to know what else you can do? Check out the Mansfield "What Can I Recycle?" playlist: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYFCjlmzhGw\\_kEtms2\\_F5d3hpwQdB\\_QH](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLYFCjlmzhGw_kEtms2_F5d3hpwQdB_QH)

*-Adapted from SmartPower Buzz, a newsletter of SmartPower.*

### Repair Café April : Learn to Fix It, Not Toss It! Plus Teddy Bear Repair.



Do you have an item that needs a little fixing, but still has plenty of life? Bring it to the next Repair Café on April 13, 2024 at the First Congregational Church, 199 Valley St., Willimantic from 10AM to 2PM. Meet some great neighbors who are willing to fix your item for free, or teach you to fix it the next time!

And "Nurse Rita" will be on hand at the Teddy Bear Clinic to repair stuffed toys that need a bit of care.

Did you know that the Repair Café was featured on Connecticut Public Television? Check out this segment on the show, "[Resourceful!](#)"

# POWERSMART

## Battery Storage Saves the Day!

Battery storage systems can provide cleaner, quieter energy security for your home.

The Connecticut Green Bank will host a webinar highlighting recent changes to the Energy Storage Solutions program including higher incentives, more equipment choices and other important information.



**FEBRUARY**  
**22**  
**THURSDAY**

### Battery Storage Systems VIRTUAL INFO SESSION 6:30-7:30PM

**Event registration:**  
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5031098464141543514?source=PowerSmart>

### Keep Up With the Latest News on Development Activity in Mansfield



#### Recent Decisions and Upcoming Public Hearings:

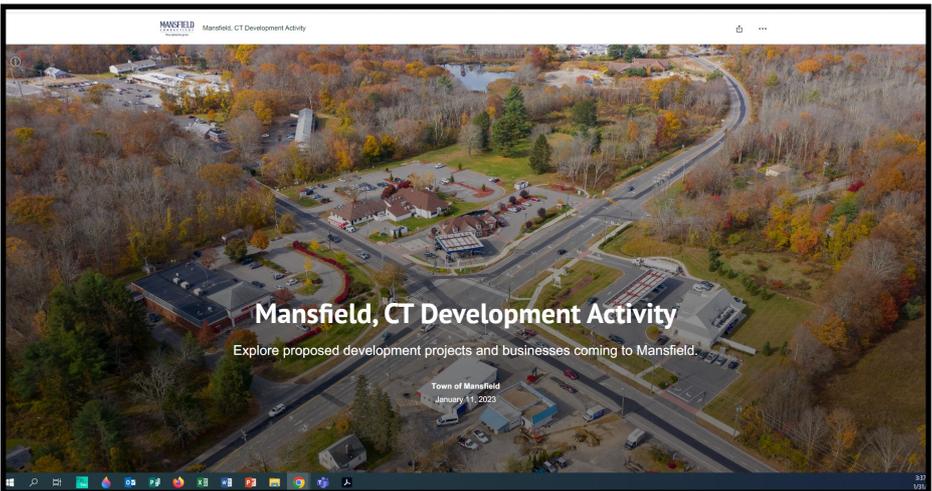
Inland Wetlands Agency- Application of Benchmark Cascade, LLC for a permit to conduct regulated activities associated with a proposed multi-family housing project (approximately 84 units) located at 541 Middle Turnpike. *Motions failed for lack of a simple majority, so therefore the project was denied.*

Inland Wetlands Agency- Application of Benchmark Cascade, LLC for a permit to conduct regulated activities associated with a proposed mixed-use building (approximately 35 units) located at 555 Middle Turnpike. *Motions failed for lack of a simple majority, so therefore the project was denied.*

Planning and Zoning Commission- PZC initiated a Zoning Regulation Text Amendment to extend the temporary and limited moratorium on new high-density housing developments to August 31, 2024. The Planning and Zoning Commission removed the initial moratorium exceptions related to developments in the Planned Business 4 Zone and age-restricted housing. During the temporary and limited moratorium, new developments over five (5) total units or with an average density greater than three (3) units per acre shall be prohibited, and no applications shall be received by the Planning and Zoning Commission or Zoning Agent. *A public hearing will be held on February 5, 2024 to hear comments regarding the extension of this moratorium.*

#### Development Activity:

Staff continues to update the [Development Activity portion](#) of the Planning and Development website with information on pending applications.



#### Housing Work Session with Elected Boards and Commissions.

On January 4, 2024 approximately 53 members of elected boards and commissions attended a virtual work session held by the Town’s Zoning Consultant, Tyche Planning and Policy Group.

A summary of the work session has been prepared and can be [downloaded here](#). The Planning and Zoning Commission is reviewing this and other feedback it has received and will draft some recommended changes to the zoning regulations. There will be opportunities for the public to provide feedback at a future date.

### NEW! Community Partnership with Tolland County Robotics’ FIRST Lego Leagues!



The Mansfield Public Library is excited to announce a new partnership with the Tolland County Robotics Foundation! This winter, the library will host two FIRST Lego League programs- one FLL Discover program for children in PreK-K and one FLL Explore program for children in 1-3 grades.

These programs are registration-based and currently at capacity, but families are invited to visit <https://www.tcrobotics.org/home> to learn more about this exciting partnership!



**Welcome to the Neighborhood: New Businesses in Downtown Storrs!**



The [Mansfield Downtown Partnership](#) recently welcomed several new businesses to [Downtown Storrs!](#) **Square Peg Pizzeria** opened in 9 Dog Lane in October and was soon joined by **Haven Hot Chicken**, which opened in 1206 Storrs Road in November.

After a soft opening in December, **Playa Bowls** celebrated their Grand Opening in 1 Dog Lane in January, with a line of fans braving frigid temps early on a Saturday morning. Mayor Toni Moran assisted Mitch Jackson, one of the local owners of Playa Bowls, along with Jonathan the Husky at the ribbon-cutting on Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024

January also saw the opening of **Action Packed**, a retro video game and comic shop, and **Nautical Bowls**, serving up superfood bowls, in 34 Wilbur Cross Way.

Rounding out the new additions will be **Huskies Restaurant & Bar**, whose new location in 33 Wilbur Cross Way is under construction. The Partnership looks forward to their opening later this winter!

Once Huskies opens, there will be 73 businesses and organizations operating in Downtown Storrs. Of these businesses, 52% are independently-owned, and 16% percent are locally owned franchises. The remaining businesses and organizations are a mix of UConn entities (e.g. UConn Health), national businesses (e.g. Chase Bank), and non-profit organizations (e.g. the Mansfield Downtown Partnership).



To see a full directory of businesses in Downtown Storrs, please visit [downtownstorrs.org/explore](http://downtownstorrs.org/explore).



**Mansfield Farms to Families 2024 Program**



Are you interested in farm-fresh produce at a low cost or no cost?

**Mansfield Farms to Families (MFFP) may be the program for your household.**

Our program offers partially sponsored CSA shares or no-cost monthly distributions to income-qualified households.

Tell me more!

**What is a CSA share?**

A CSA—Community Supported Agriculture—is an arrangement where a household pays a farm a lump sum at the beginning of the growing year for fresh-picked produce harvested throughout the season. Once the produce is harvested at the farm, the participant picks up their "share" according to the farm's set schedule—usually once each week over several weeks (i.e. every Wednesday for 13 to 18 weeks). Mansfield Farms to Families can help reduce the cost of a CSA share for about 15 applicants.

**What is the monthly distribution?**

Monthly distributions include a hearty selection of locally sourced fresh produce and food products from area farms. Our food boxes typically include fruit, vegetables, eggs, milk and sometimes even foods like honey, apple cider, maple syrup, or ice cream. When products are available, MFFP participants are notified in advance to pick them up, with at least five fresh food boxes provided throughout the season. Our program can offer 100+ food boxes each distribution.

**How can I find out more about Mansfield Farms to Families Options?**

Visit: <https://www.mansfieldct.gov/1896/Food-Programs>, email [delvalled@mansfieldct.org](mailto:delvalled@mansfieldct.org) or call 860-487-9871



# Connecticut's COUNTRYSIDE

BOLTON • COVENTRY • MANSFIELD • TOLLAND

## Adventure, Agriculture, Arts & More!

### An Invite to All Mansfield Businesses: Forum & Social – February 7

The Steering Committee of Connecticut's Countryside invites Mansfield businesses to a special networking event on Wednesday, February 7. There will be a business forum at 4:00 PM followed by a social at 6:00 PM.

Connecticut's Countryside is a collaborative, regional economic vitality effort by the Towns of Bolton, Coventry, Mansfield, and Tolland. Read more about it [here](#).

The business forum will take place at UConn's [Innovation Partnership Building](#) (159 Discovery Drive) and will include a tour of the facility and a presentation about "Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a Business Resource." The social will be at [Hops 44](#) (625 Middle Turnpike) following the forum.

This free event is open to businesses located in Mansfield, Bolton, Coventry, and Tolland. Join us for any or all parts of the evening.

RSVP by Feb. 5 [here](#) or by emailing [rsvp@uconn.edu](mailto:rsvp@uconn.edu).

### Cultural Coalition of N.E. CT Honors E.O Smith Music Director Amanda Hanzlik

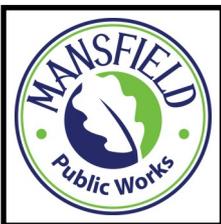


Congratulations to Amanda Hanzlik, Director of Choral Activities at Edwin O. Smith High School and Mansfield resident for being honored recently by the Cultural Coalition of Northeast Connecticut

In addition to her role as a teacher at Edwin O. Smith High School (Regional District 19), Amanda will serve as President of the American Choral Directors Association Eastern Region from 2024-2026. She was a semifinalist for the 2024 GRAMMY

Music Educator Award and made her Carnegie Hall conducting debut in 2023, with the E.O. Smith Chamber Singers. 2023-24 marks her 25th year as a music educator, teaching in K-12, early childhood, college, community, church and senior-citizen ensembles, in both urban and rural settings. Amanda is a graduate of the University of Iowa and Teachers College, Columbia University. She resides in Storrs with her husband Louis and children, Grace and Ethan.

### Follow Road Closures on Our New Website Page



Inclement weather and high winds has brought an increase in downed trees during storms, and sometimes when you don't expect it. The Department of Public Works, in cooperation with the Emergency Management staff, have created a report on the website that reports road closures as they occur. It will be updated as roads are re-opened. [You can find it on the DPW page.](#)

### Monthly Interviews on WILI-AM Offer Updates on Mansfield News



Local broadcast legend Wayne Norman has a regular morning chat with Town Manager Ryan Aylesworth every month on WILI-AM. The show is a great way to catch up on what's current in Mansfield.

The next shows will be Wednesday, February 7 and Friday, March 1 live at 7:40 AM.

[Here is Ryan's interview](#) on WILI from January 12.

# Let's Scrap Food Waste!

Eat what you buy. Compost the scraps.



*If you already compost, read no further! If not, we can help!*

Climate change may seem like a problem too big to deal with in our daily lives. But we can do some things that are not going to bust your budget and, in fact, may save money.

Start with food. The production, distribution, and disposal of food significantly contributes to greenhouse gas emissions. Food waste makes up 22% of Connecticut's trash. We can reduce greenhouse gas emissions by composting food instead of incinerating it along with our trash.

If you currently put your food in a compost pile or bring it to the Mansfield Transfer Station for composting, thank you! That is the best way to deal with scraps. **If you don't have a back yard, or are not ready to start a compost pile for scraps at home, we now have two new options for you.**

**OPTION 1:**

**Weekly Curbside Food Scrap Collection**  
\$14.75/ month (first month is free)

- You will receive a 6-gallon container to collect food scraps
- Place at the curb to be emptied weekly by Blue Earth Compost
- Collection will begin once we have 100 households signed up
- Benefits: Eliminates the management of a backyard compost pile, includes meat, bones, fats

**Sign up at: [Mansfieldct.gov/setupservice](https://Mansfieldct.gov/setupservice)**

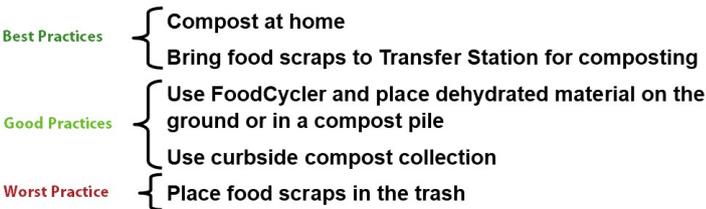
**OPTION 2:**

**In-Home FoodCycler**  
\$20.00/ month

- You will receive a FoodCycler that will dehydrate food scraps
- Rental includes tech support and regular filter replacements
- The resulting finished material is perfect for sprinkling on the ground or composting
- Benefit: Eliminates the management of a compost pile, includes most bones and all meat, odorless process

**Sign up at: [Mansfieldct.gov/setupservice](https://Mansfieldct.gov/setupservice)**

Which is the right option for you? Below shows the order of best to worst practices for handling food scraps based on greenhouse gas emissions impacts.



## LOCAL ASSISTANCE



**Mansfield Human Services**  
860-429-3315  
Case management, referrals, public assistance programs, crisis intervention, food pantry, seasonal programs



**Mansfield Youth Services**  
860-429-3319  
Clinical services, prevention, youth programs, parenting support, truancy and attendance support



**Mansfield Senior Center**  
860-429-0262  
Daily programing, transportation services, meal programs, outreach, and volunteer services



**Fee Waiver Program**  
Eligible residents can receive a reduction in fees for designated Town services



**Food Programs**  
FoodShare Mobile Food Pantry, Mansfield Farms to Family



**R.A.RE Program**  
Rent, mortgage, utility and emergency assistance for eligible residents affected by COVID-19



**Seasonal Programs**  
Back to School, Campership, and Holiday Program

## DO YOU NEED ACCESS TO FOOD?

### Food Pantries

- Mansfield Human Services  
860-429-3315
- Storrs Congregational Church  
860-429-9382
- Husky Harvest Food Pantry  
860-486-3918
- Covenant Soup Kitchen  
860-423-4603

### Additional Assistance

**Connecticut FoodShare**  
A mobile food pantry that stops in Mansfield. <https://ctfoodshare.org/>

**2-1-1**  
Dial 2-1-1 or go to [www.211ct.org](http://www.211ct.org) for free connections to critical health and human services within the community.

**Mansfield Farms to Family Program**  
Partially sponsored CSA shares from local farms. Please contact [MFFP@mansfieldct.org](mailto:MFFP@mansfieldct.org)

**Mansfield Public Schools Free and Reduced Lunch**  
If you believe you qualify, please contact [foodserve@mansfieldct.org](mailto:foodserve@mansfieldct.org)

### Have you seen the Mansfield Community Center video about 20 years of Family, Fitness, and Fun?



Enjoy this video created for the MCC 20th Anniversary Celebration that shows a little of what the center does. Enjoy!

<https://www.facebook.com/MansfieldCommunityCenter/videos/1283588178906232>

### Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFBs): Designed to Keep You Safe



The Connecticut Department of Transportation received grant funding for, designed, and recently awarded a contract for the installation of three and the upgrade of one existing Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons (RRFBs) on Storrs Road, State Route 195. Participation in the project was voluntary, however, the Town of Mansfield elected to participate in the project in return for completing subsequent maintenance of the RRFBs.

RRFBs are a tool for Complete Streets and can enhance pedestrian safety by reducing crashes between vehicles and pedestrians at uncontrolled approaches to unsignalized intersections and mid-block pedestrian crossings by increasing driver awareness of potential pedestrian conflicts. The Route 195 RRFBs are located at mid-block crossings, a pedestrian crossing not at an intersection. The contractor installed two double-sided RRFBs at each location with one on each side of the road.



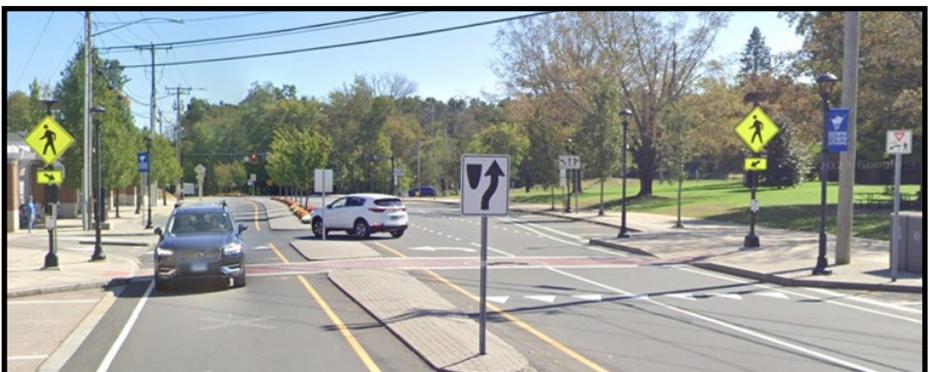
In urban areas, the side of the road installation location can make them difficult to observe especially during sun-lit daylight. Some communities have a third RRFB in the median to increase driver awareness. Pedestrians, which includes runners and bicyclists, activate these RRFBs by pushbuttons. As RRFBs are relatively new and our community is host to citizens throughout the United States and the world, one should not assume every vehicle driver understands what to do when a pedestrian activates the RRFB.

A driver should stop and yield to pedestrians when the beacon is flashing. A driver should not assume that pedestrians are only present when a RRFB is flashing as activating it is a choice, not a requirement or the RRFB could not be functioning properly.

Feedback the Town of Mansfield’s Department of Public Works has received to date:

- Some drivers do not know what to do and do not stop.
- Pedestrians assume drivers will stop and do not continue to look for oncoming vehicles.
- Many drivers are distracted and do not observe the flashing beacons or pedestrians.
- During sun-lit daytime hours, the beacons are difficult to see flashing.
- The beacons continue to flash well after a fast walking pedestrian or runner or bicyclist crosses the road. This fact can cause a driver to think the RRFB flashes when no one is crossing so why stop or yield in the future.
- Some pedestrians do not activate the RRFBs.

There are alternative products on the market that have sensors that activate the RRFBs when detecting a pedestrian. These systems are potentially dangerous as it removes pedestrian responsibility. If a pedestrian is accustomed to this type of system and then encounters one without it, the pedestrian may assume the RRFB will activate when it will not, creating a false sense of security and a potential dangerous situation.



## Learn the Best Ways to Recycle Take-Out Foods Packaging

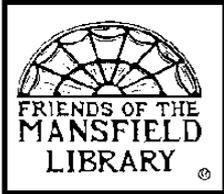


It's a cold, winter night and the game is on. Or you are getting home late from work. It's a popular time of year for take-out food. However, it can be very confusing to know how to properly dispose of and recycle this type of waste.

Community volunteers and Recycling Coordinator Virginia Walton continue to create these easy-to-follow videos as a service to local residents! Look for this video, *Ordering Take-Out: What Can I Recycle?* on the Town's YouTube channel, along with other recycling topics you may find useful:

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=Town+of+Mansfield+CT+Youtube](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=Town+of+Mansfield+CT+Youtube)

## Winter Book Sale from the Friends of the Mansfield Library



**Saturday, February 10 from 9:00am – 4:00pm**

**Sunday, February 11 from 9:00am - 3:00pm**

Proceeds from the book sales goes towards supporting entertaining and informative programs the library, such as the ice cream social and summer reading program, and purchases like museum passes, the Adirondack chairs for the lawn, the covered area in the playground, and the vegetable garden.

Book sales take place in the Buchanan Auditorium at the Mansfield Public Library. Depending on the weather, in addition to the auditorium there is a tent set-up outside the library. Parking is available in the lots on either side of the library.

The Friends accept payment in the form of cash, checks and credit cards.

For more information, visit the Friends of the Mansfield's website: [friendsmansfieldlibraryct.org](http://friendsmansfieldlibraryct.org)

## A Smile Says Hello and Welcome. Smiles are a Universal Language



Being treated with respect, being able to move around freely in one's own community, and feeling welcome to participate in the cultural life of the community are all basic human rights (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, 1948). Unfortunately, it is not unusual for people walking around Mansfield/Storrs—and along many streets in our world today—with their eyes on the ground or on their telephone screens, oblivious to the people around them.

Being ignored, or not being seen, feels dehumanizing. If you are new to Mansfield and nobody acknowledges your presence in public settings, it's hard not to feel isolated and lonely. Locally, it is often the custom to walk past anybody you don't know. Not speaking has become a local habit. This habit, however, does not serve us well as humans. In other regions of the United States, and in many other countries, greeting strangers is customary and walking past a stranger is considered rude.

One way to overcome feelings of isolation that go with being ignored is to simply greet people as we pass each other, to acknowledge that we see each other. The foundation of human rights is a feeling of connection between people, acknowledgement that we recognize the humanity of others even if they are strangers to us.

As a university community, Mansfield is filled with people from all over the globe. The Human Rights Commission is asking all Mansfield residents to start saying hello to people, or simply to smile when strangers cross your path. A smile is a welcoming gift. It costs nothing and takes no time. A smile can be an invitation to let a person ask a question or simply to acknowledge their presence. A smile also can go a long way toward diminishing the fear we may have of each other. A smile is a very small gesture of welcome that can have astonishing results and begin good conversations.

The HRC has placed displays around town in public buildings, the Senior Center, the Public Library, the schools and the Community Center. Each display contains a brochure that explains the purpose and work of the Human Rights Commission, contact information and stickers that say "Happy to Say Hello." Please accept our invitation to say hello, take one of the stickers, look at the brochure and start acknowledging other people you meet.

The HRC believes that a friendlier Mansfield will be a place where people feel respected, included and happy to be here!

-Submitted by Jane Fried, Chair, Mansfield Human Rights Commission

### Employees Celebrated for Milestones in Mansfield



In late December the Town of Mansfield celebrated employees who are marking milestones in service with the Town. This recognition is always a highlight of the annual employee holiday potluck luncheon.

Congratulations to these long-time employees for your service to the community!

(Photo at right) Marking 30 years of service to the Mansfield Fire Department is Uri Lavitt, center, with Town Manager Ryan Aylesworth, left, and Chief of Shared Services Maria Capriola, right. Another long-time employee, Charlie DeBoer of the Department of Public Works, was recognized for celebrating 25 years of service to Mansfield.

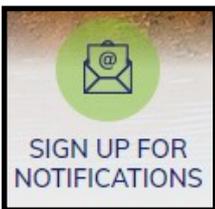


(Photo at left) Rich Roberge, center, has served with the Information Technology Department for 15 years. Employees celebrating 5 years of service include Jennifer Caldwell (Parks & Recreation) Jerl Casey (Revenue Collections), Dorothy Del Valle and Mary Flood, (both in Human Services).



(Photo above) A number of employees are being recognized for 10 years with the Town. Left to right, Town Manager Ryan Aylesworth, Jeffrey Kraenzle (Public Works), Peter Connell (Public Works), Alain Bourassa (Public Works), Chief of Shared Services Maria Capriola, and Joe Burnham (Fire & Emergency Services). Others who were unable to attend the ceremony include Jake Baxter (Public Works), Michael Carifa (Fire & Emergency Services), and Rick Landry (Fire & Emergency Services).

### Sign Up for Emergency Notifications



Residents are encouraged to sign up for emergency notifications from the Town of Mansfield. The Town uses the system to notify residents of important information during an active emergency, as well as for disaster recovery information.

The Town also gives residents the option to opt-in to receive other urgent information pertaining to local government operations. We

encourage everyone who lives or works in Mansfield to sign up for this important notification system through [our website](#)



### Season of Giving Helps Assist Many Families All Through the Year



The Season of Giving program for 2023 saw tremendous generosity! Thank you to everyone in the Mansfield community who helped to make our Season of Giving Campaign a success! We are also appreciative of our partners the Mansfield Resident State Troopers Office for providing so many toys (see photo below) through the Stuff-a-Cruiser initiative which our Human Services and Youth Services staff were able to share with families who needed them.

[Here is a list of all the amazing folks](#) who helped us this season.



### Reminder: When the Weather is Bad, Please Heed the Parking Ban



The Town of Mansfield winter parking ban is in effect beginning November 1st. Per Mansfield’s Motor Vehicle & Parking Ordinance, Section 182-3, “No motor vehicle shall be parked on any public highway under the jurisdiction of the Town of Mansfield, or in any area designated as a municipal parking area, between the hours of midnight and 6:00 a.m., from November 1 through April 15; or at all times when there is any accumulation of snow or ice on said highways or parking areas.” [Read the full guidance here.](#) If you have any questions, please call the Department of Public Works Administrative Office at 860-429-3331.

### Cultural District Opportunity Explored through Three Sessions



The Town of Mansfield, in partnership with the Cultural Coalition, concluded a three-session exploration to gather input about potentially establishing a cultural district in Mansfield.

Earlier sessions in November and December focused on the process and benefits to forming a Cultural District, gathering input and sharing information with the general community as well as the creative arts community. The third session in

January targeted those stakeholders who might be interested in helping to plan and establish a district here. All three sessions were well-attended by key players involved with arts in our community.

The Cultural Coalition is the Designated Regional Service Organization for the Northeastern region of CT, and now serves 42 towns in eastern CT. According to the Cultural Coalition, “a Cultural District is a specific area of a city or town identified by the municipality that has a number of cultural facilities, activities and/or assets – both for profit and nonprofit. A walkable, compact area is easy for visitors to recognize. It is a center of cultural activities – artistic and economic. It is a place in your city/town where community members congregate, and visitors may enjoy those places that make a community special.” Mansfield Town officials have been meeting with the nonprofit Cultural Coalition to discuss the benefits and attributes of a potential cultural district within the community.

A staff team from the Town and the Mansfield Downtown Partnership, in its economic development staffing role for the Town, are meeting to discuss next steps after a very positive response from the sessions about the prospect of a Mansfield Cultural District.

More information on cultural districts and the role of the Cultural Coalition in eastern Connecticut can also be found at that website at [www.CultureSECT.org](http://www.CultureSECT.org)

## Mansfield Library: Learn, Join in, Explore What's Happening



### Special Children's Events:

**Take Your Child to the Library Day:** Library Valentines, Saturday, February 3 from 10:30AM-1PM

Celebrate "Take Your Child to the Library Day" by creating a special valentine for the library! Join your favorite Children's Librarians for a fun library-themed storytime at 10:30AM. Stay to play or drop-in after stories anytime between 11AM & 1PM for open play-time and library-themed crafts, including Library Valentines, coloring, & Build-Your-Own Book crafts!

**Wild Defenses! Children's Nature Program** with Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center, Friday, February 16 at 3PM

From thorns and quills to slime and smells, plants and animals have amazing ways to defend themselves! Join a special visitor from the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center to take a closer look at some of these incredible adaptations, and see plants and meet animals that have them. This program is best for families with children ages 4-8, but all families are welcome!

**Pop-Up Wonder Workshop.** Tuesday February 20 from 1-4PM in MPL's Buchanan Auditorium

Get creative with friends at the library! Drop in between 1-4PM for crafts, science experiments and open STEM play. This program is best for preschool and elementary age kids, but all families are welcome.

**TEEN NIGHT:** Love Stinks! A Valentines Vs. Anti-Valentines Teen Party, Thursday February 15th at 6:30PM

Do you love love or think Valentine's Day is the worst day of the year? Join us for love & anti-love crafts, friendship bracelets, sweet treats & free pizza! This program is open to Middle School & High School students only.

### Adult Programs

**The Healing Power of Meditation,** Tuesday, February 6 at 6:00PM, Virtual via Zoom

Matthew Raider, MD is a, clinical physician and coordinating director of the Geriatric Teaching Program in Family Medicine at Middlesex Hospital in Connecticut. He has been practicing meditation for over 35 years. Dr. Raider presents the latest clinical research on how meditation can improve our physical, mental and spiritual health. This evening you will have a chance to practice this simple technique that can reduce stress, enhance relaxation and promote inner growth.

Register for the Zoom link at: <https://mansfieldct.jotform.com/library/healing-power-of-meditation>

**Virtual Author Talk: Spice, Spirit, and Swoon—A Guaranteed Happily Ever After with Rom-Com Author Tessa Bailey,**

*#1 New York Times bestselling author of It Happened One Summer and Hook, Line, and Sinker,* Thursday, February 8th at 8:00 PM, Virtual

Join us as the *#1 New York Times* bestselling author Tessa Bailey talks about the launch of her new super hot sports romance duology with a rom-com about a bad boy professional athlete who falls for his biggest fan in her new book *Fangirl Down*.

Register for the link by clicking on this event on the Mansfield Public Library website calendar: <https://mansfieldpubliclibraryct.org/>

**Adults 18+ Only Game Night,** Tuesday, February 20 from 5:00PM- 8:00PM in MPL's Buchanan Auditorium

Join us at the Mansfield Public Library for our monthly Game Night for adults 18+! Drop in to the auditorium for Magic the Gathering casual commander play or try one of our specially selected board games!

Bring your favorite Magic the Gathering commander deck, or learn to play with one of our guest decks. The library will provide board games, but feel free to bring your own to share. We will be happy to help with rules and instructions! All experience levels welcome. No registration required.

**Virtual Author Talk: Exploring Identity, Love, and Being Black in America in Fiction Writing: A Conversation with Award-Winning Author Jason Mott**  
*New York Times Bestselling Author and National Book Award Winner*  
Tuesday, February 20th at 4:00 PM, Virtual

You're invited to join us as we talk to *New York Times* bestselling author Jason Mott about his recent novel *Hell of a Book*. This magnificent work of fiction is and  
(Continued)



**(Mansfield Public Library Events cont.)**

deeply honest, at times electrically funny, and is a book that goes to the heart of racism, police violence, and the hidden costs exacted upon Black Americans.

**Weekly Events**

**Toddler Time:** Tuesdays at 10:30AM in MPL's Program Room

Learn, dance and play through stories and songs! After storytime, families are invited to stay and play with friends. This program is best for toddlers ages 1-3, but all families are welcome.

**Music and Movement:** Fridays at 10:30AM in MPL's Buchanan Auditorium

Let's move! Sing, dance and move your bodies in this interactive, music-based program, followed by group playtime. This program is best for ages 0-4, but all families are welcome.

**Spectacular Saturdays:** Saturdays at 10:30AM in MPL's Program Room

Drop in between 10:30AM-12PM for open play, crafts, and coloring with friends at the library! Families are invited to meet new friends and neighbors in our Program Room for an opportunity for children to socialize and play. Every other week, enjoy a fun & engaging storytime led by MPL Children's Librarians. This program is fun for families with children of all ages!

**And there are more great programs planned for March. Please visit the Mansfield Public Library [website](#) for details!**

**Town Seeks Agricultural Proposals for Three Town-Owned Parcels**

ISSUED: February, 2024

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: February 22, 2024, 12:00 pm local time

Please Submit all Applications to: Michael Stankov, Environmental Planner, Mansfield Department of Planning and Development, 4 South Eagleville Road, Storrs CT 06268

(860.429. 3335 or [StankovM@MansfieldCT.org](mailto:StankovM@MansfieldCT.org))

The Town of Mansfield seeks proposals from qualified agricultural producers for the leasing for agricultural purposes of the following properties:

- Bonemill Field
- Coventry Road Field
- Eagleville Preserve Field



Leases will begin March 15, 2024. Specific information about each property can be found at <https://www.mansfieldct.gov/2498/2024-Agricultural-Land-Leases>, and lease applications/proposals are available at <https://mansfieldct.jotform.com/planning/town-of-mansfield-agricultural-prop> or by contacting Michael Stankov at Mansfield Town Hall 860-429-3335 or at [StankovM@MansfieldCT.org](mailto:StankovM@MansfieldCT.org).

Applications must be submitted no later than February 22, 2024. Individuals may submit proposals for multiple properties. Proposals received after this date will not be considered. Electronic submissions are preferred.

If anyone contemplating submitting a proposal is in doubt as to the true meaning of any part of these specifications, they may submit requests for information and/or clarification in writing via e-mail to [PlanZoneDept@mansfieldct.org](mailto:PlanZoneDept@mansfieldct.org) by February 8. Addenda for these questions will be posted on the town's website by February 15. No interpretations as to the meaning of the request for proposal or application shall be made to any bidder orally.

A final selection will be made and all applicants will be notified by March 1.

The Town reserves the right to reject any or all proposals in whole or in part or to waive technical defects, irregularities and omissions if, in its judgment, the best interests of the Town will be served.



### What’s Happening in Town? Don’t miss these *EVENTS!*

Watch for postings on the Town of Mansfield [website](#) . Watch for updates from [the Mansfield Senior Center](#) which hosts many online and in-person activities each month along with the [Mansfield Public Library](#) and the [Mansfield Community Center](#).

### Upcoming Municipal Meetings

For the most up-to-date schedule of Town meetings, go to our website at <https://www.mansfieldct.gov/calendar.aspx?CID=32>

We encourage residents to participate in Mansfield’s governance. Many municipal meetings are still being held virtually, but some are fully in-person. Hybrid meeting options (a combination of virtual attendees from remote locations and in-person at a central location) are offered for the Town Council and The Board of Education

Regardless of the meeting format, residents may still submit Public Comment prior to meetings. You may view some meetings as they occur via Live Video Stream on our YouTube channel. Other meetings are recorded so you may review minutes and recordings after the fact.



To find the log-in information for each of these meetings, go to the [Agendas/Minutes](#) page on the town’s website. Look up the name of the committee, and click on the arrow to the left of the title. The agenda for the upcoming meeting will appear. Click on it to open, and it will list who to contact to receive call-in information.

Minutes of past meetings are also posted there.

**Please Contact Our Department Leaders for What You Need**



Our staff is ready to help answer any questions you have about how to access the services of your community. Please reach out to them by phone or by email for anything you need.

Department	Department Leader	Contact
Animal Control	Noranne Nielsen, Animal Control Officer	860-487-0137 ACO@mansfieldct.org
Assessor	Rochelle Lambert, Assessor	860-429-3311 Assessor@mansfieldct.org
Building and Housing Inspection	Michael Ninteau, Building & Housing Director	860-429-3324 BldgDept@mansfieldct.org
Downtown Partnership	Cynthia van Zelm, Executive Director	860-429-2740 MDP@mansfieldct.org
Eastern Highlands Health District	Robert Miller, M.P.H., R.S., Director of Health	860-429-3325 ehhd@ehhd.org
Emergency Management	Adam Libros, Emergency Management Director	860-429-3328 OEM@MansfieldCT.org
Facilities	Allen Corson, Facilities Director	860-429-3320 facilities@mansfieldct.org
Finance	Amanda Backhaus, Finance Director	860-429-3345 FinanceDept@mansfieldct.org
Fire Marshal	Adam Libros, Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal	860-429-3328 FireMarshal@mansfieldct.org
Fire & Emergency Services	David Dagon, Interim Fire Chief	860-429-3323 firedept@mansfieldct.org  <b>EMERGENCY: 911</b>
Housing Authority	Rebecca Fields, Housing Authority Executive Director	860-487-0693 rfields@mansfieldhousingct.org
Shared Services	Maria Capriola, Chief of Shared Services	860-429-3380 HR@MansfieldCT.org
Human Services	Allison Maynard, Director of Human Services	860-429-3315 HumanServ@MansfieldCT.org
Information Technology	Jaime Russell, Information Technology Director	860-429-3384 technology@mansfieldct.org
Mansfield Discovery Depot	Debbie Plourde, Director	(860) 487-0062 MDD@mansfieldct.org
Parks & Recreation/ Mansfield Community Center	Jay O'Keefe, Director	860-429-3015 parks&rec@mansfieldct.org



**Please Contact Our Department Leaders for What You Need**

Department	Department Leader	Contact
Planning & Development	Jennifer Kaufman, AICP Director	860-429-3330 PlanZoneDept@mansfieldct.org
Public Library	Devon Andrews, Library Director	860-423-2501 MansfieldLibrary@MansfieldCT.org
Public Works	John Carrington, Public Works Director	860-429-3331 PublicWorks@mansfieldct.org
Registrars of Voters	Anne Greineder, Democratic Registrar  Vera Ward, Republican Registrar	860-429-3368  860-429-3369 VoterRegistrars@mansfieldct.org
Senior Center	Mary Flood (Interim) Senior Center Supervisor	860-429-0262 TaylorS@mansfieldct.org
State Police (Resident State Trooper)	Sergeant Tim Merrill, Resident State Trooper Sergeant	860-429-6024 Police@mansfieldct.org  <b>EMERGENCY: 911</b>
Tax/Revenue Collections	Jerl Casey, Collector of Revenue	860-429-3307 Taxes@mansfieldct.org
Trash and Recycling	Virginia Walton, Recycling Coordinator	860-429-3333 waltonvd@mansfieldct.org
Town Clerk	Sara-Ann Chaine, Town Clerk	860-429-3302 TownClerk@MansfieldCT.org
Town Manager	Ryan Aylesworth, Town Manager	860-429-3336 TownMngr@mansfieldct.org
Youth Services	Katherine J. Bell, Psy.D Youth Services Supervisor	860-429-3319 BellKJ@mansfieldct.org