



TOWN OF MANSFIELD

TOWN COUNCIL

Special Committee on Community Quality of Life

COMMITTEE REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, issued by the Mansfield Town Council's Special Committee on Community Quality of Life, presents recommendations designed to mitigate the negative impact of the University of Connecticut's annual spring weekend event and related quality of life issues upon the community.

Spring weekend at the University of Connecticut traditionally occurs in late April prior to the final week of classes. The weekend normally consists of a few sanctioned university activities, in addition to various unsanctioned events attracting large numbers of young people and featuring behaviors such as public intoxication, underage drinking, fighting and other violence, and property destruction. More recently, the community has also experienced other large parties and gatherings during warm weekends throughout the fall and spring, and these parties have been accompanied by much of the same problem behavior associated with spring weekend.

The occurrence of spring weekend and other problem behavior throughout the year places a considerable strain upon local, regional, state and university public safety and emergency services resources. Furthermore, the committee finds that these events and activities negatively impact the quality of life for the community as a whole, and adversely affect the reputation of the town, the university and the student body. While the town, state and university staff members are working very hard to "manage" and to "contain" spring weekend, the committee believes that the community needs to be more proactive and to place greater emphasis on correcting the systemic conditions and causes leading to the problem behavior.

These systemic causes and conditions are several, and include substance abuse, the history and culture behind spring weekend, and the decline of the Hunting Lodge Road/Carriage House Drive/Celeron Square neighborhood that is the traditional site of spring weekend. As the neighborhood has turned over to rental units, it has become more prone to certain environmental conditions, such as noise, litter and the deterioration of the properties, and has become a more attractive site for outdoor parties and rowdy behavior.

The committee has prepared the following list of goals that are geared toward correcting the problem behavior associated with spring weekend and other large parties, and are also designed to address the general deterioration of the neighborhood and related quality of life concerns:

1. Promote and maintain a safe and healthy environment for the community, including the student body.
2. Mitigate the impact of spring weekend and other problem behavior upon the community by eliminating or dramatically reducing violence, alcohol and drug violations, injuries to persons, damage to property, and other related nuisances.
3. Dramatically reduce and control nuisance behavior such as noise, littering and vandalism plaguing the Hunting Lodge Road neighborhood in the vicinity of Carriage House and Celeron Square Apartments.
4. Encourage and promote positive relations between students living off-campus and their neighbors. Help to foster a positive "student experience" for those attending the state's flagship university.
5. Reduce substance abuse in the community. Encourage students and others to "party smart," without harm to themselves and to other people.
6. Protect the safety of tenants and improve and maintain the quality of rental housing in town.

7. Reduce and control the impact of large parties and problem behavior upon municipal, regional, state and university public safety and emergency services. Ensure that there is an adequate level of public safety and emergency services available to meet the needs of the community at all times.
8. Establish and maintain regular relations between town, state and university staff and public safety agencies to address issues relating to off-campus housing and other student activities.
9. Help residents to maintain property values in areas of town populated with and adjacent to rental housing.

Working off the identified set of goals, the committee has also developed a number of strategies designed to help achieve those objectives. Some of the strategies could be coordinated primarily by the town, while others are designed to be pursued in partnership with the university. The list of recommended strategies is as follows:

Town of Mansfield Strategies

1. Increase law enforcement presence in affected areas of town, to build good working relationships with residents (including students), to enforce the criminal code and town ordinances, and to maintain public order.
2. Work with the management of Carriage House, Celeron Square and other landlords to discourage problem tenant behavior, and to make their premises a less attractive location for large parties.
3. Increase and maintain enforcement of zoning regulations, to ensure proper levels of unit occupancy and to improve and maintain the physical condition of rental properties.
4. Develop and implement various nuisance abatement ordinances and regulations, to assist with law enforcement activities, to protect public health, to improve and maintain the physical appearance of properties, and to maintain property values in neighborhoods.
5. Develop and implement a housing code for certain types or all residential rental property in town to protect the safety of tenants and to improve and maintain the quality of rental housing in the community.
6. Develop and implement a licensing procedure for rental properties to track the development and number of rental units in town, to monitor compliance with the housing and fire codes, and to raise revenue for code enforcement activities.
7. Produce and distribute a model lease and fact sheet for landlords and tenants to promote positive relations, to discourage problem behavior among tenants and to protect the rights of both parties.

Joint Town of Mansfield/University of Connecticut Strategies

1. Develop and maintain regular contacts between town, state and university staff and public safety agencies to work cooperatively to address public safety and quality of life issues concerning off-campus housing.
2. Promote and support the efforts of the new community-campus partnership on substance abuse, which is designed to reduce and control substance abuse within the community.
3. Conduct meetings with senior state and university law enforcement personnel, and the university administration, to discuss and to develop means to mitigate the impact of spring weekend and related problem behavior upon the Mansfield community as a whole.
4. Develop a means to ensure that there is an adequate level of public safety and emergency services available to meet the needs of the community at all times.
5. Partner with the university to create a position of community liaison coordinator (CLC) responsible for developing, coordinating and implementing any number of programs to promote positive

relations between students residing off-campus and the community, and to educate students about the importance of being “good neighbors.”

6. As part of the proposed center for off-campus services, develop and implement an off-campus housing certification program to promote the establishment of quality rental housing, to assist students with locating quality housing, and to help landlords market rental properties to students.
7. Examine the feasibility of partnering with the university to extend water and sewer to promote density and off-campus housing in the Hunting Lodge Road/Carriage House Drive/Celeron Square neighborhood and other areas adjacent to the university.

In summary, spring weekend and the other parties and problem behavior that occur throughout the year have become too significant a burden for the community to bear. Therefore, it is key that the town emphasize that it is in the interest of all stakeholders and the entire community to address the situation and to correct the systemic causes behind this problem behavior. Once this report has been finalized, the committee recommends that the town council direct the town manager to approach the university to determine its interest in partnering with the town on some or all of these proposals. If the university wishes to participate, the town manager and the university administration should assemble a joint staff committee to design an appropriate action plan, and to begin work to implement the recommendations outlined herein.

INTRODUCTION

The members of the special committee on community quality of life are pleased to present this report to the Mansfield Town Council and the community.

The town council established the special committee on community quality of life in July 2004, following the staff report issued regarding last year's University of Connecticut Spring Weekend. The council has long monitored spring weekend, and the event has been a recurring agenda item at council meetings over the past few years.

The council charged the special committee with developing recommendations to address and to mitigate the impact of spring weekend and related quality of life issues upon the community. The committee is comprised of council members Bruce Clouette (appointed as chair), Alison Whitham-Blair and Alan Hawkins, and receives staff support from the town manager and assistant town manager. Mayor Elizabeth Paterson and Council member Helen Koehn have been present at most of the committee meetings, and have been very engaged in the proceedings. The committee meetings are open to the public, and a few members of the public have attended. Mr. Robert "Bob" Cook, a local resident, is a regular attendee and has contributed significantly to the committee's work.

This report sets out the observations of the committee, as well as a series of recommended goals and strategies that the town could pursue on its own or in partnership with the university and other stakeholders to improve the present situation.

OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

Spring weekend at the University of Connecticut traditionally occurs in late April prior to the final week of classes. The weekend normally runs from Thursday night into early Sunday morning, and consists of a few sanctioned university activities such as the Saturday night concert at Gampel Pavilion in addition to various unsanctioned events like the large parties at the Carriage House and Celeron Square apartment complexes. Typically, these unsanctioned activities have attracted large numbers of young people, including a significant number of non-students, and have featured behaviors such as public intoxication, underage drinking, fighting and other violence, and property destruction. Over the years these unsanctioned events have also experienced a significant number of arrests, including both students and non-students, and a number of sexual assaults. In addition, the partygoers tend to leave a vast amount of litter, garbage and other debris in the wake of these parties. It is largely because of these unsanctioned activities that spring weekend has gained its notoriety throughout the state and the Northeast region.

More recently, the apartment complexes at Carriage House Drive and Celeron Square as well as other residences along Hunting Lodge Road have become the site of large parties and gatherings during other warm weekends throughout the fall and spring. These parties have also been accompanied by much of the problem behavior associated with spring weekend, including binge drinking, drug and alcohol violations, noise, violence and litter. At one such party this past fall, state police arrested eight people, including six UConn students, for a variety of charges including the distribution of alcohol without a permit, the sale of alcoholic beverages to a minor as well as narcotics violations. The police ended up

charging one individual in attendance at the party, who was not a student, for assaulting an officer during the investigation. The police also seized 14 kegs of beer and a small quantity of marijuana.

Needless to say, the occurrence of spring weekend and other problem behavior throughout the year places a considerable strain upon local, regional, state and university public safety, emergency services and other resources. Furthermore, the committee finds that these events and activities negatively impact the quality of life for the community as a whole, and adversely affect the reputation of the town, the university and the student body. Spring weekend and the other parties and problem behavior that occur throughout the year have become too significant a burden for the community to bear.

From reading the spring weekend report, and through conversations at town/university relations meetings, the committee has learned that town, state and university staff members are working very hard to “manage” and to “contain” spring weekend. For example, town, state and university police have developed crowd control measures, and the fire and emergency services staff have implemented a triage mechanism to treat injuries at the scene. Chief Robert Hudd, UConn’s Director of Public Safety, has commented several times on how university and municipal police forces from around the nation visit Mansfield to learn how the community responds to spring weekend, because the techniques are so effective.

Yet, while the town and the university are doing their best to contain and manage spring weekend and other impromptu parties and celebrations during the year, the community needs to place greater emphasis on correcting the systemic conditions and causes leading to the problem behavior. In this regard, the committee believes that the town and the university need to be more proactive.

In the committee’s opinion, the systemic causes and conditions behind the problem behavior are several, and include substance abuse, and the history and culture behind spring weekend. With regard to substance abuse, particularly alcohol abuse, the combination of “binge” drinking and large crowds produces a volatile mixture that frequently leads to violence. While substance abuse afflicts people of all age groups, binge drinking often begins at an early age, before the person heads to college. Unfortunately, the “culture” and the history behind spring weekend serve to promote this behavior. This dilemma presents the university and the town with an additional set of challenges, and exacerbates the situation for the entire community.

Another systemic factor contributing to the situation is the deterioration of the Hunting Lodge Road/Carriage House Drive/Celeron Square neighborhood that is the traditional site of spring weekend and other problem behavior throughout the year. The expansion of parties and problem behavior throughout the year has occurred at least in part because of the conversion of owner-occupied, single-family homes in this neighborhood to student rentals. As the neighborhood has turned over to rental units, it has become more prone to certain environmental conditions, such as noise, litter and the deterioration of the interior and exteriors of the properties. And, as the physical character of this neighborhood has declined, it has become a more attractive site for outdoor parties and rowdy behavior. To some extent, the entire neighborhood is now suffering. Partygoers intimidate local drivers and pedestrians, and residents at Holinko Estates are threatened by the behavior of the large crowds. Tenants, including students, may be at risk as the quality of the housing stock declines. The area has become less attractive for families and owner-occupied housing, and property values could fall over time, especially in adjacent neighborhoods.

Beyond the change in the physical character of the affected neighborhood, the committee has learned that students often cite the lack of off-campus amenities and things to do in Mansfield as a contributing factor to problematic behavior. Obviously, this argument has its weaknesses, as a lack of things to do is never a justifiable excuse for unlawful behavior. Furthermore, there are a lot of leisure activities to be found on campus, particularly with respect to sports, arts and culture. That being said, however, there is some validity to the statement that there are not a lot of leisure opportunities in Mansfield for young adults, and President Austin's Task Force on Substance Abuse made reference to this deficiency. Mansfield does not yet have a thriving downtown with coffee shops, restaurants, shops and other places that students could frequent, but the community is working to create such a destination with the Mansfield Downtown Partnership's municipal development project for Storrs Center. Similarly, the Eastbrook Mall will soon feature a multiplex theater, which will create additional leisure opportunities for students.

It is important to note that both the town and university have begun to research and to develop strategies to deal with the systemic conditions and challenges faced by the community. As mentioned, the Storrs Center project is underway and one of the reasons behind this initiative is to create amenities and services for all residents. Students will certainly benefit from a thriving Storrs Center, and will find a number of leisure activities that could potentially lessen the emphasis on and the popularity of large off-campus parties. Also, following the recommendations set out in President Austin's task force, the town and the university have collaborated to establish a community-campus partnership on substance abuse to create additional mechanisms to tackle these specific issues and concerns. In addition, the town has adopted an ordinance regulating the possession of alcohol by minors, and an ordinance to control litter. Furthermore, staff has increased its enforcement of existing zoning regulations with respect to single-family homes in this area of town, and is in the process of developing a housing code for review by the town council.

As the committee continued to learn about the transition of the Hunting Lodge Road/Carriage House Drive/Celeron Square neighborhood and staff's efforts to address this change, the members became more focused on the systemic conditions that are exacerbating the public safety problems and affecting the quality of life for town residents. While these quality of life issues are in some ways distinct from the public safety challenges posed by spring weekend and the other large parties, there is a connection between the problem behavior and the environment of the neighborhood. Consequently, the committee expanded the scope of its review and developed goals and strategies to address these broader quality of life concerns as well.

PROPOSED GOALS

Following its initial review and research efforts, the committee prepared several goals geared toward correcting the problem behavior associated with spring weekend and the other large parties that have started to occur throughout the year. The committee has also developed goals designed to address the general deterioration of the neighborhood and the quality of life concerns noted above. Some of these goals are decidedly ambitious, but the committee believes that the town needs to set the bar high to successfully tackle these issues.

The list of goals that the committee wishes to present is as follows:

1. Promote and maintain a safe and healthy environment for the community, including the student body.
2. Mitigate the impact of spring weekend and other problem behavior upon the community by eliminating or dramatically reducing violence, alcohol and drug violations, injuries to persons, damage to property and other related nuisances.
3. Dramatically reduce and control nuisance behavior such as noise, littering and vandalism plaguing the Hunting Lodge Road neighborhood in the vicinity of Carriage House and Celeron Square Apartments.
4. Encourage and promote positive relations between students living off-campus and their neighbors. Help to foster a positive "student experience" for those attending the state's flagship university.
5. Reduce substance abuse in the community. Encourage students and others to "party smart," without harm to themselves and to other people.
6. Protect the safety of tenants and improve and maintain the quality of rental housing in town.
7. Reduce and control the impact of large parties and problem behavior upon municipal, regional, state and university public safety and emergency services. Ensure that there is an adequate level of public safety and emergency services available to meet the needs of the community at all times.
8. Establish and maintain regular relations between town, state and university staff and public safety agencies to address issues relating to off-campus housing and other student activities.
9. Help residents to maintain property values in areas of town populated with and adjacent to rental housing.

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

Working off the set of goals identified above, the committee has developed a number of strategies designed to help the town achieve those objectives. Some of the strategies are short-term in nature, while others would require additional time to achieve. Also, some of the strategies could be coordinated primarily by the town, while others are designed to be pursued in partnership with the university. For each strategy, the committee has identified a responsible party, an estimated timeframe and financial impact, as well as the critical success factors.

A. Town of Mansfield Strategies

1. **Increase law enforcement presence in affected areas of town, to build good working relationships with residents (including students), to enforce the criminal code and town ordinances, and to maintain public order.** As part of this strategy, the town should implement community-policing strategies such as beat officers, school resource officers and bike patrols where resources permit. Since August 2004, the town's has increased its law enforcement activity significantly in the Hunting Lodge Road/Carriage House Drive/Celeron Square neighborhood with some positive impact and results. With its relatively small force, it is difficult for the town to dedicate community-policing resources to specific areas of town. Yet, by partnering with the university police department, community-policing could be a productive "town/gown" initiative.
 - **Responsible party** – the responsible parties for this objective would consist of town and state law enforcement agencies.
 - **Timeframe** – this initiative has already been implemented to some degree, and would remain ongoing.
 - **Financial impact** – in partially implementing this strategy, the town has experienced increased costs for overtime. The town and the state have attempted to defray costs by asking property owners to hire officers on private duty, and could also bill landlords and others under the town's Fees for Special Police Services Ordinance.
 - **Success factors** – initially, the town has experienced a spike in arrests in pursuing this initiative. Over time, however, the success factors for this recommendation would include a decrease in complaints, criminal and civil violations and arrests, as well as the establishment of a good working relationship between the neighborhood residents and the police.

2. **Work with the management of Carriage House, Celeron Square and other landlords to discourage problem tenant behavior, and to make their premises a less attractive location for large parties.** Potential initiatives under this strategy include the landlords implementing a "no trespass" policy for their properties, as well as guest restrictions and no keg provisions in their leases. Landlords could also construct fencing and landscaping to make their properties less accessible to pedestrian traffic. Over the past few years, the management of Carriage House Apartments has been more cooperative and willing to work with the town. Carriage House, for example, has hired police officers on private duty during warmer weekends throughout the year, and has purchased a patrol bicycle for town officers. In addition, this complex has increased its fines for a violation of the "no keg" provision in its lease, and has implemented a policy to prohibit trespassing. The Celeron Square management is also in the process of implementing a "no trespass" policy.
 - **Responsible party** – the responsible parties for this strategy include town staff and the various landlords and property managers.

- **Timeframe** – this initiative has already been implemented to some degree, and would remain ongoing.
 - **Financial impact** – under this strategy, property owners have and would continue to experience some additional costs, which they could conceivably recover through rental income.
 - **Success factors** – if this strategy were to be fully implemented, the town would probably see an initial spike in complaints and arrests at the apartment complexes, followed by decreased complaints and criminal activity, as well as smaller, more manageable parties and crowds.
3. **Increase and maintain enforcement of zoning regulations, to ensure proper levels of unit occupancy and to improve and maintain the physical condition of rental properties.** The town has increased its zoning enforcement activity over the past year with some apparent positive impact and results. Because the planning and zoning office has a limited number of staff, the police have agreed to assist with this effort. Also, at some point the town might need to hire additional staff such as part-time citations officers.
- **Responsible party** – the planning and zoning office is currently the responsible party for this effort, but could receive assistance from town and state police.
 - **Timeframe** – this initiative has already been implemented to some degree, and would remain ongoing.
 - **Financial impact** – with this strategy, the town could experience increased costs for overtime. To keep costs down, staff has attempted to modify work schedules to accommodate the enforcement activity within regular hours.
 - **Success factors** – in increasing its enforcement activity, the town has issued an increased number of zoning violations in this neighborhood. Over time, the success factors would include a decreased number of complaints and violations, and a greater awareness among landlords of the provisions of the zoning regulations.
4. **Develop and implement various nuisance abatement ordinances and regulations, to assist with law enforcement activities, to protect public health, to improve and maintain the physical appearance of properties, and to maintain property values in neighborhoods.** As stated above, the town has adopted an ordinance regulating the possession of alcohol by minors as well as an ordinance regulating litter. Where feasible, town staff should increase its enforcement of the noise ordinance and its use of the fees for special police services ordinance. In addition, the town should also research the viability of adopting a loitering ordinance and a general public nuisance ordinance such as that implemented by the City of Fort Collins, Colorado (home to Colorado State University).
- **Responsible party** – the responsible parties for this strategy would include the town manager's office and other town staff, the town attorney and the town council (as approval authority).
 - **Timeframe** – a town ordinance generally requires three to six months to draft, to shepherd through the approval process and to begin to implement.
 - **Financial impact** – in pursuing this strategy, the town would incur fees for legal review and could also realize some increased personnel expenditures, such as overtime, for the enforcement of these various ordinances. The town could conceivably provide additional shifts to its part-time police constables or hire part-time citations officers to enforce both the zoning regulations and the nuisance abatement ordinances.

- **Success factors** – the success factors for this effort would include an increase in enforcement activity followed by a demonstrable reduction in various public nuisances, such as littering, underage drinking and overly loud parties and gatherings.
5. **Develop and implement a housing code for certain types or all residential rental property in town to protect the safety of tenants and to improve and maintain the quality of rental housing in the community.** Town staff is currently preparing a housing code to submit to the town council for review. Current staffing levels are insufficient to assume this major responsibility, and, depending upon the anticipated workload, the town would need to hire a part-time or perhaps even a full-time housing inspector. The committee also has some interest in mandating the installation of sprinklers for smaller multi-family complexes and converted single-family homes, which would require enabling legislation on the part of the state legislature. (The state building code does require sprinklers for new multi-family complexes of 13 or more units.) The implementation of a housing code would most probably be a controversial issue for landlords.
- **Responsible party** – the responsible parties for this initiative would consist of the town manager's office, the building department, the town attorney and the town council (as approval authority).
 - **Timeframe** – staff will probably need another month to finalize the draft housing code and the town council would need at least a month to review the proposal. If the housing code were adopted, the town would need another three to four months to hire a part-time or full-time housing inspector.
 - **Financial impact** – the financial impact of this recommendation would range from \$30,000 (part-time) to \$65,000 (full-time) for a housing inspector's salary and fringe, plus additional one-time or recurring costs for administrative support, supervision, office furniture, equipment and legal fees. The town could defray the cost through inspection and licensing fees. Staff is also preparing an application seeking Small Cities grant funding for the first two years of the operation of a housing code program.
 - **Success factors** – the success factor for this initiative would be the demonstrable ability to ensure that rental housing in town meets minimum safety standards.
6. **Develop and implement a licensing procedure for rental properties to track the development and number of rental units in town, to monitor compliance with the housing and fire codes, and to raise revenue for code enforcement activities.** Incorporated within the housing code, staff is preparing a draft licensing procedure for rental properties. As with the housing code, this proposal would probably prove controversial among the landlord community.
- **Responsible party** – the responsible parties for this recommendation would include the building department, the town manager's office, the town attorney and the town council (approval authority).
 - **Timeframe** – the timeframe for this proposal would be the same as that of the housing code.
 - **Financial impact** – the financial impact for this objective would be the same as that of the housing code.
 - **Success factors** – the success factor for this initiative would be the establishment of a demonstrable means to track the development and the number of rental units in town, to monitor compliance with the housing code, and to raise revenue for code enforcement activities.

7. **Produce and distribute a model lease and fact sheet for landlords and tenants to promote positive relations, to discourage problem behavior among tenants and to protect the rights of both parties.** The town should strongly encourage landlords to add lease provisions designed to prohibit kegs, to limit the number of guests and large gatherings, and to prohibit fires. In designing and implementing this strategy, it would be beneficial to collaborate with the landlord community to design the lease, to hopefully obtain their buy-in.
- **Responsible party** – the responsible parties for this initiative would consist of the town attorney and the landlord community. The model lease could be available at various town and university offices, and via the web.
 - **Timeframe** – staff would probably need one to two months to develop the model lease, and to make it available for distribution.
 - **Financial impact** – the financial impact of this recommendation would consist of legal fees and publication costs. The town could defray expenses through licensing fees.
 - **Success factors** – the success factors related to this proposal would include the significant use of the model lease within the landlord community, and a reduction in problem tenant behavior.

B. *Joint Town of Mansfield/University of Connecticut Strategies*

1. **Develop and maintain regular contacts between town, state and university staff and public safety agencies to work cooperatively to address public safety and quality of life issues concerning off-campus housing.** As part of this initiative, the responsible parties should emphasize to students that the jurisdiction of student code of conduct includes off-campus activities, and the town should encourage the university to enforce the code rigorously for off-campus behavior. Also, the town and the university police agencies should be encouraged to partner on community-policing efforts in order to build better relationships with the residents in the affected areas of town. Related to this proposal, personnel from the town and the state police, and the university dean of students' office have formed a communications team that has met with students residing at Carriage House. Staff believes the student residents were engaged and benefited from the discussions. In addition, the university has increased its application of the code of conduct to off-campus behavior, as university sanctions appear to be the greatest deterrent for the students.
- **Responsible party** – the responsible parties for this strategy would include the town manager's office, the planning and zoning office, the dean of students' office, the office of residential life, and town, state and university police.
 - **Timeframe** – the timeframe for this proposal would be immediate and ongoing.
 - **Financial impact** – the committee believes the financial impact of this proposal would be negligible.
 - **Success factors** – the success factors of this recommendation would initially consist of increased enforcement activity, followed by decreased complaints, violations of the student code of conduct, and criminal and civil violations and arrests. Additional success factors would include the implementation of joint community-policing initiatives and positive feedback regarding those efforts, as well as the increased willingness of the university to apply the student code of conduct to off-campus behavior.

2. **Promote and support the efforts of the new community-campus partnership on substance abuse, which is designed to reduce and control substance abuse within the community.**

President Austin's Task Force on Substance Abuse did recommend the establishment of the community-campus partnership, and this endeavor is now underway. Furthermore, the university has hired a director of alcohol and other drug addiction services, who is a significant addition to the team. President Austin's task force recommended a number of strategies that the community-campus partnership could implement, including improvements to the university's judicial process, the dedication of additional resources to prevention and intervention programs and providing increased opportunities for alcohol-free student activities. Also, the community-campus partnership could work to encourage permittees such as package stores, bars, restaurants and other vendors to adhere to a "code of conduct" with respect to the sale of alcoholic beverages. For example, the code of conduct could include language to promote responsible advertising and to encourage these vendors to sell beer in only aluminum and plastic containers to reduce the number of glass projectiles during spring weekend. Permittees could also be encouraged to participate in programs such as "cops in shops," in which undercover police are invited to work inside an establishment to identify underage buyers.

- **Responsible party** – the responsible parties for this recommendation include: the community-campus partnership; the town manager's office and other town staff; the dean of students' office; town, state and university police; and package store owners and other permittees.
- **Timeframe** – the community-campus partnership is now underway, and it will develop a timeframe for its activities.
- **Financial impact** – the community-campus partnership has not yet articulated any financial needs, but the committee estimates that the partnership will need a modest operating budget (\$3,000-\$5,000) for programs, which could perhaps be obtained through grant funding.
- **Success factors** – the community-campus partnership has not yet identified any critical success factors, but the committee believes that those factors could consist of a demonstrable decrease in substance abuse, as determined by surveys and other measures. Other success factors could include a decrease in drug and alcohol violations within the community, the adoption of a "code of conduct" by a majority of package store owners and other vendors in town, and some measurable decline in the number of violations for the sale of alcohol to minors.

3. **Conduct meetings with senior state and university law enforcement personnel, and the university administration, to discuss and to develop means to mitigate the impact of spring weekend and related problem behavior upon the Mansfield community as a whole.**

The participants in these meetings should seriously examine the viability of ending spring weekend, as it exists today, or the possibility of significantly curtailing the unsanctioned activities and related problem behavior that occur every year. To increase the likelihood of success, the parties should consider expanding the scope of these conversations to include the leaders of the UConn student government. The town does not have the resources on its own to end spring weekend or to significantly curtail the unsanctioned activities, and would require the assistance and the cooperation of the state and the university to accomplish these objectives. Related to this recommendation, the mayor and the town manager have recently met with Commissioner Boyle of the Connecticut Department of Public Safety, who was very receptive to the town's comments and concerns.

- **Responsible party** – the responsible parties for this initiative would include town, state and university law enforcement personnel, the university administration and potentially student government leaders.

- **Timeframe** – because the planning for UConn Spring Weekend 2005 is well underway, the parties might need to wait until May or June 2005 to commence work on this proposal.
 - **Financial impact** – at this point, the committee estimates the financial impact of this recommendation would be negligible.
 - **Success factors** – the success factors for this initiative would consist of ending spring weekend or significantly curtailing the unsanctioned activities and related problem behavior.
4. **Develop a means to ensure that there is an adequate level of public safety and emergency services available to meet the needs of the community at all times.** As explained, spring weekend and other large events place an enormous drain upon public safety and emergency services. During spring weekend, for example, ambulances from around the region are busy conducting transports from student parties leaving few resources available to the remainder of the community and the region. The town should work with area, state and university resources to develop a plan to ensure that the community and the region retain an appropriate level of coverage during these events. This will be no easy task, as public safety and emergency services are already stretched thin in northeastern Connecticut.
- **Responsible party** – local, regional, state and university public safety resources would constitute the responsible parties for this objective.
 - **Timeframe** – with the large number of entities involved in the planning, this initiative would probably require several months to develop.
 - **Financial impact** – the financial impact of this recommendation is undetermined, but might entail additional personnel and equipment costs.
 - **Success factors** – the success factors related to this proposal would consist of the implementation of a plan to provide an appropriate level of public safety and emergency services necessary to meet the needs of the community at all times, particularly during the occurrence of spring weekend and other large events.
5. **Partner with the university to create a position of community liaison coordinator (CLC) responsible for developing, coordinating and implementing any number of programs to promote positive relations between students residing off-campus and the community, and to educate students about the importance being “good neighbors.”** The town and the university would jointly fund the position, and the employee would report to both entities. Example programs would include neighborhood clean-up days, community service projects, student safety and off-campus housing fairs, and community welcome events. Colorado State University and the City of Fort Collins have partnered to establish a successful community liaison program administered by a full-time coordinator, and the town and the university could use this example as a model. It would be important for the town to share in the funding of this position in order to ensure a commitment to municipal priorities. On a related matter, UConn’s Center for Off-campus Services Development Committee has prepared a proposal to create a comprehensive center for off-campus services, which would be responsible for providing off-campus housing and community relations services. The CLC could be a good addition to the center for off-campus services initiative, and town and university staff have met briefly to discuss the proposal in concept.
- **Responsible party** – the responsible parties for this recommendation would consist of the town manager’s office and other town staff, the dean of students’ office, the office of residential life, and town and university public safety entities.

- **Timeframe** – the committee estimates that six to 12 months would be required to establish and fill the CLC position, and to develop and implement initial programming.
 - **Financial impact** – the committee projects that the financial impact of this recommendation would range from \$50,000 to \$65,000 for the CLC salary and fringe, shared 50-percent between the parties. The CLC would also need a modest operating budget (\$3,000-\$5,000) for programs.
 - **Success factors** – the success factors for this initiative would include improved relations between students residing off-campus and the community, as well as a reduction in nuisance and problem behaviors in neighborhoods populated by students.
6. **As part of the proposed center for off-campus services, develop and implement an off-campus housing certification program to promote the establishment of quality rental housing, to assist students with locating quality housing, and to help landlords market rental properties to students.** This proposal could be a win/win program for both student tenants and landlords
- **Responsible party** – the responsible parties for this initiative would consist of the community liaison coordinator, and the office of residential life.
 - **Timeframe** – the committee estimates the community liaison coordinator (CLC) would need three to six months to develop and to implement this proposal.
 - **Financial impact** – the financial impact of this recommendation would consist of the CLC salary and fringe, as well as some marketing and production expenses.
 - **Success factors** – the success factors for this strategy would be the establishment of an effective and user-friendly off-campus housing certification program.
7. **Examine the feasibility of partnering with the university to extend water and sewer to promote density and off-campus housing in the Hunting Lodge Road/Carriage House Drive/Celeron Square neighborhood and other areas adjacent to the university.** As part of this effort, the town should research the possibility of amending its zoning regulations to revise the definition of “family” and to promote density, and consider the feasibility of a special overlay zone for multifamily housing. UConn has one of the highest percentages of students living on campus among major universities its size, and the extension of the university’s water and sewer services to this neighborhood could promote density and the development of the quality rental housing that UConn students need. Ostensibly, landlords owning and managing higher quality units would be more likely to more tightly regulate tenant behavior. Also, tenants may be less likely to damage property that is more recently constructed and highly maintained, and this appears to be the experience with the new student apartments constructed on campus. The extension of water and sewer service could also promote the development of age-restricted, assisted living, affordable and/or market rate multifamily housing opportunities. To implement this strategy, the parties would need to resolve various uncertainties regarding UConn’s water and sewer system capacities.
- **Responsible party** – the responsible parties for this recommendation would include the university administration and other departments, the planning and zoning office, the town attorney, the planning and zoning commission, the department of public works and the town manager’s office.
 - **Timeframe** – the planning effort for this initiative would be extensive, but could commence immediately.

- **Financial impact** – the committee estimates that the engineering, planning and construction costs related to this strategy would be considerable.
- **Success factors** – the success factors would include the construction of an adequate number of quality off-campus housing units within the community, and the potential redevelopment of the Hunting Lodge Road/Carriage House Drive/Celeron Square neighborhood.

SUMMARY

The committee members and staff have worked hard to prepare this report, and are optimistic that the proposed recommendations would enable the town to mitigate the impact of spring weekend and related quality of life issues upon the community.

The committee requests that the town council review and comment on the recommended goals and strategies outlined in this report. Also, the committee would like the opportunity to schedule public hearings, including at least one on campus, to present the report to the university and the larger community, and to receive feedback on the draft. In addition, this report should be shared with the town/university relations committee, the community-campus partnership on substance abuse, the planning and zoning commission and other related bodies to solicit input from those entities.

As indicated in this report, spring weekend and the other parties and problem behavior that occur throughout the year have become too significant a burden for the community to bear. Although the Town of Mansfield and the University of Connecticut are making some progress, they must be more proactive in their efforts to remedy the present situation, as the risks to students, residents and other members of the community are too great. Therefore, it is key that the town emphasize that it is in the interest of all stakeholders and the entire community to address the situation and to correct the systemic causes behind this problem behavior.

Based upon the input and comments that it receives, the committee will revise the report as necessary. Once the report has been finalized, the committee proposes that the town council direct the town manager to approach the university to determine its interest in partnering with the town on some or all of these proposals. If the university wishes to participate, the town manager and the university administration should assemble a joint staff committee to design an appropriate action plan, and to begin work to implement the recommendations. (As discussed earlier, some of the initiatives outlined in the draft are already underway.) Going forward, the committee anticipates that staff would provide periodic progress reports to the town council.

The members of the committee on community quality of life appreciate the council's review and feedback on this report, and the recommendations outlined herein.

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15. National League of Cities, Town-University Caucus.
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APPENDIX A

List of Items and Proposals Discussed, But Not Selected for Inclusion At This Time

1. To assist with the enforcement of zoning regulations, provide the university with lists of addresses of residences suspected to be inhabited by more than four unrelated persons, and receive the names from the university of those students claiming those addresses as residences.
2. Establish an ordinance to prohibit jaywalking.
3. Hire part-time citations officers to enforce loitering, jaywalking and mass assembly ordinances.
4. Hire an outside expert or consultant to develop proposals for the town.
5. Reduce overtime costs by requiring resident troopers and Mansfield police officers to work "split shifts."
6. Prohibit the placement of interior furniture outside a dwelling, where it is exposed to the elements, as an addition to the litter ordinance.