

**TOWN/UNIVERSITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, May 9, 2006
Audrey P. Beck Municipal Building
Council Chambers**

Minutes

Present: P. Barry, T. Callahan, B. Clouette, J. Bell-Elkins, R. Hudd, AJ Pappanikou, E. Paterson, W. Simpson, G. Zimmer

Staff: M. Hart, G. Padick

1. Opportunity for Public to Address the Committee

None.

2. April 11, 2006 Meeting Minutes

Ms. Bell-Elkins made a motion, seconded by Mr. Zimmer, to approve the minutes of April 11, 2006. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Update re: Mansfield Downtown Partnership

Mr. Berliner reported that staff and the development team continue to make progress with the special design district for Storrs Center. In addition, the team is working to obtain public financing from the state and federal governments, and have submitted the application to the planning and zoning commission to rezone the parcel for the new building 1A.

Mayor Paterson reported that the meeting with the neighbors and adjoining property owners to review the plans for the new building 1A went very well, and that the attendees expressed support for the project. Cynthia van Zelm and Macon Toledano are doing a terrific job in communicating with the public.

Mr. Barry seconded the mayor's comments, and stated that Cynthia and Philip Lodewick made a fine presentation to university alumni, which was similarly well received.

In other news, the Downtown Partnership is busy planning its September "Festival on the Green" celebration. The site of the event will be more condensed this year, and there are several special activities planned for all age groups.

4. Spring Weekend Review

Mr. Hudd reported that, from a public safety perspective, the event went well. We are able to close the event down earlier each year.

Mayor Paterson stated that she is concerned about the Friday night activities at Celeron Square Apartments, as the tenor of the crowd tends to be more aggressive on that evening. The DUI stops that the state police enforce are key, and have helped to promote the use of designated drivers. Also, the university staff members who work with students all year long to address substance abuse and student life should be commended for their efforts. Furthermore, she did not notice as many EO Smith students in attendance this year, which is a positive development.

Ms. Bell-Elkins said that Friday night is indeed an issue and that one of the goals of the university's spring weekend committee is to reduce the number of students that attend the unsanctioned events. The pep rally went extremely well, with an estimated 5,000 in attendance.

Mr. Clouette commented that he thought the media coverage was responsible, and the coverage of the press conference was positive.

Mr. Hudd also agreed that the crowd on Friday night does behave differently, and stated that the police did confiscate some weapons that evening. The police practice a strategy of "containment."

Mayor Paterson liked the progress that public safety personnel made this year towards achieving a unified command structure, with regular updates.

Mr. Pappanikou remarked that, as tuition increases, parents will be more mindful of the investment they are making in their children's education, and will be less tolerant of improper behavior.

Mr. Simpson stated that he had conducted an informal survey of the students who work at the Co-op, and was surprised at their responses. Many of the students he contacted are not in favor of the unsanctioned activities that occur.

Ms. Bell-Elkins explained that the feedback is useful, and she will bring that back to the spring weekend committee.

5. Mansfield Housing Code

Mr. Hart reported that last evening the Mansfield Town Council adopted the proposed housing code and that staff would now move forward to implement the housing inspection program. The code will be effective July 1, 2006.

Mr. Pappanikou asked about how the town plans to handle the suggestions made to regulate parking? Mr. Hart answered that staff plans to research this issue separately, and report back to the town council.

Mr. Callahan commended the town upon the passage of the code.

6. Center of Off-campus Services

Ms. Bell-Elkins reported that the student fee advisory committee has recommended to the provost that he accept the proposal to establish the center for off-campus services. If the provost accepts the recommendation, the proposal will then move forward to the board of trustees for approval.

Mr. Callahan complimented Ms. Bell-Elkins for her work on this issue, and stated that he hopes the proposal will ultimately be approved.

7. Update re: UConn Water System

Mr. Callahan reported that the university continues to make progress on this issue, and that the three pump stations in the Willimantic wellfield will be replaced with more efficient equipment. The university has also shared with the Department of Public Health and the town the draft scope of services that a consultant will be expected to perform in preparation of the master plan for water and wastewater services. In addition, the transmission and metering at the Fenton River wellfield is complete.

Mr. Padick asked if the state had completed its review of the scope of services. Mr. Callahan answered that the state had indeed completed its review.

8. Other Business

Mr. Clouette complimented the university for painting the houses and the yellow barn along Route 195. The buildings look much better.

The committee adjourned its meeting at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew W. Hart
Assistant Town Manager