

Town Council
Thursday, December 10, 2009 - 6:00 p.m.
Windham Middle School Auditorium

Public Hearing Minutes

The Town Council held a public hearing on December 10, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. in the Windham Middle School Auditorium, 123 Quarry Street, Willimantic, Connecticut to hear public comment in order to allow the sale of alcohol by the Windham Textile and History Museum at the Town Hall Auditorium for the Snowball on January 16, 2010.

Call to order

Mayor Ernest S. Eldridge called the public hearing to order at 6:00 p.m.

Public Comment

Stephanie Iazzetta, South Windham, spoke against serving alcohol at the Snowball. She was concerned about the liability to the town and that as adults we should model that we can have a good time without alcohol.

Pat Christadore, taxpayer, spoke against serving alcohol in town buildings. He believes the town doesn't understand the liability of serving alcohol and we don't need to serve alcohol to make a profit.

Steve Kenton, Windham Textile and History Museum President, mentioned that the argument he is hearing is if alcohol should be served at all in town buildings. Mr. Kenton stated that if there is a specific reason why they shouldn't serve alcohol than he wants to hear it.

Rebecca Cronin, business owner and former teacher, spoke in favor of serving alcohol at the Snowball.

Thomas White, stated that the Council didn't hold a public hearing to hear comments on whether or not the town should serve alcohol on town properties. He stated he was ashamed that they didn't give the people the right to speak against it. Mr. White informed the Council that it isn't whether something is going to happen or not because you can't watch everyone, but it is a liability.

Brooke Shannon informed the Council that she went to the insurance company that insures the Windham Textile and History Museum and they were told that they are covered for the event at the Town Hall. She was also told that the Council was not going to be liable.

Davie Howe thanked the public for coming out, but he will not take action until he hears from the town attorney. Mr. Howe stated that he was against serving alcohol on town property.

John Monahan asked why are we here, because it is not for the Snowball. He mentioned that the auditorium was intended to be used for more meeting space. He spoke against serving alcohol in town buildings. He doesn't understand why there was an add in the Chronicle for the Snowball already when it has not been approved.

Lori Jeffers stated that the auditorium is a government room and what you do for one person you have to do for all groups. She believes the town is setting a bad example for the youth in our community by allowing alcohol on town property.

Lynn Duval stated that the add appeared in the Chronicle because the Windham Textile and History Museum made the request a year ago. The guidelines created were not in place when the application was submitted. She mentioned that they have met all the requirements and it is possible that the Council be sued, but is not probable.

Doug Lary, 183 Summit Street, Willimantic, stated he works at an insurance company and it might make sense to ask for a higher insurance because it is not a lot more for the extra coverage. Mr. Lary supports the Windham Textile and History Museum.

Jerry Iazzetta, South Windham, stated that he was in favor of the event but not in favor of alcohol being served.

Thomas Millerd informed the Council that he was in favor of the Windham Textile and History Museum but is against the Snowball being held at a town building. He mentioned that he works for Rham High School and someone got hurt on a set of stairs and everyone was sued. He is not in favor of serving alcohol in town buildings.

Robert Horrocks asked if these other clubs have a 3 million dollar insurance and are they being sued. Mr. Horrocks stated that they have been holding the Snowball for years and the people running the event are responsible. He questioned if the social clubs are a bad influence on our youth. Mr. Horrocks mentioned that the museum loves to preserve the heritage and the Snowball will be done in first class order.

Jan-Maya Schold stated that a lot of the things she is hearing are people falling, which have nothing to do with alcohol. Ms. Schold said we either don't allow anyone to use the facility, because of steps or just allow functions or no functions.

Jamie, Vice President, of the Windham Textile and History Museum stated that this is an issue of basic fairness. He mentioned that the museum has followed every rule that is in place and if people are not in favor of the rules then they should look into it another venue.

Curtis Ehler, 376 Pleasant Street, Willimantic, spoke against serving alcohol at the Snowball. He mentioned that we are a recovery community and if we serve alcohol it may have an impact on the town.

Jeffrey Veins, taxpayer spoke against the Snowball serving alcohol, but is in favor of the event. Mr. Veins mentioned that it is a huge liability to the town and the Council has a job to protect the citizens that are not present at the public hearing. He questioned the Council where does it stop.

George Buch, Willimantic, mentioned that in consideration of the application he would like the Council to keep in consideration the history of the Windham Textile and History Museum. He stated that it is not the first time they applied for a liquor permit and never had a problem.

Brook Shannon stated that her problem is because the application was submitted a year ago and they have been planning for a year and if alcohol is not served at the Snowball it will jeopardize the museum. She can't understand why the alcohol issue is being brought up so late in the process.

Katherine Ives, 149 High Street, Willimantic, spoke in favor of the Snowball serving alcohol. She stated that it is a high-class event and they are responsible adults not teenagers.

Bernard D'Auteille, Willimantic, stated that alcohol is a big issue and the museum can raise their money any other way, but don't make alcohol be the factor. He informed the Council that you don't need alcohol to raise money.

Volunteer for the Windham Textile and History Museum stated that they hold a lot of functions that don't have alcohol. She wanted the Council to understand that it costs \$1,500.00 a week to keep the museum open and it is a lot of work to keep it open for the public.

Ms. Hensen stated that there are always going to be people who sue and people who don't sue. She mentioned that the Mayors Ball is going to be alcohol free, but the Snowball traditionally serves wine.

Leo Santucci, 74 Windham Street, Willimantic, asked since when did we get so afraid in this country that we can't have a Snowball. Mr. Santucci mentioned that the last time he checked alcohol is legal so he asked everyone to stop the nonsense, stop the liability issue and approve for the museum to serve the alcohol at the Snowball.

Adjournment

Public hearing was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

