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CITY OF DANBURY

155 DEER HILL AVENUE

DANBURY, CONNECTICUT 06810

COMMON COUNCIL

REPORT

March 1, 2005

Mayor Mark D. Boughton
Members of the Common Council

Re: **Review of Public Buildings Use Policy**

The Common Council Committee appointed to review the public buildings use policy met on February 8, 2005 at 7:30 P.M. In attendance were committee members Nolan, Saracino and Saadi. Also in attendance were Director of Finance Dena Diorio, Superintendent of Public Buildings Richard Palanzo, Director of Elderly Services Susan Tomanio and Council Members Calandrino, Cavo and Teicholz, ex-officio.

Mr. Nolan stated that this committee was formed in response to a letter from Ms. Saracino regarding feedback on the implementation of policies regarding the Senior Center. Ms. Saracino stated that she had a concern about the intent of the ordinance. It was her understanding that the City was looking to raise revenue by renting the Senior Center for events. She did not believe it was meant to prevent use by pre-existing groups who are residents but not part of the Senior Center program.

Ms. Tomanio stated that when she took over there were a number of groups using the old jail. New groups have approached her requesting the use of Elmwood Hall. Ms. Saracino stated that it was her understanding that the rental policy did not include these groups, just people who wanted to use the hall for events.

Mr. Nolan said that one of the issues identified was that of liability. There is a lack of clarity as to what constitutes use of the building by those who are there to enjoy the Senior Center. Ms. Tomanio said there was a men's bridge club. These groups are not part of the senior center programs. These groups are there after program hours when there is not staff present. Ms. Diorio said groups outside normal programming are outside the policy. People were being let into the building on Saturdays. There are liability and security issues.

Mr. Saadi stated that the intent of the ordinance was very clear. All groups were required to go through the application process. Exemptions were carved out and there was no contemplation that people would be allowed to use the facilities without going through the process, especially after hours. Mr. Palanzo said that he was unaware that other groups were allowed to use the facility, but there have been no problems. These are small groups of seniors who do not collect dues. They have no income and cannot afford to pay a custodian. Mr. Palanzo does not have enough money in his budget to put on a custodian.

Mr. Saadi said the main concerns are security and liability issues. Certain groups could be exempt from having to pay a fee, but this doesn't address the liability issue and having no one to monitor the facility.

Mr. Nolan said the ordinance is good public policy with some implementation wrinkles. We want to make sure that we are not causing the community pain.

After further discussion about liability and security issues, Mr. Saadi made a motion to take no action. Seconded by Ms. Saracino. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

VINCENT NOLAN, Chairman

MARY SARACINO

THOMAS SAADI