

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING: DECEMBER 5, 2023

PUBLIC COMMENT

First Name Last Name Street Address Comments: Per Council rules and procedures, please limit comments to what can reasonably be read to the meeting record in three (3) minutes or less. Please be mindful that this form is for public comment only. Please direct questions/general inquiries to Council members directly.

Rhea	Drozdenko	9 Longworth Ave #1 Middletown, CT	Greetings member of the Council. I regret that I am not able to attend in person tonight, but am grateful I can share comments here. My name is Rhea Drozdenko, and I am a River Steward with the Connecticut River Conservancy - an advocacy organization dedicated to protecting our watershed. One way we do that is through removing aquatic invasive species - like water chestnut - from our waterways to promote native habitats and protect recreational opportunities. Our largest infestation of water chestnut is at Keeney Cove - a site that has significant ecological value. CRC is seeking support from both the cities of Glastonbury and East Hartford to continue to remove this plant and ramp up efforts to curb the infestation. In addition to this work, CRC is continuing an outreach campaign about the threat of invasive hydrilla, another aquatic invasive species in Keeney Cove and the Connecticut River. We are eager to continue conversations with Glastonbury about options for disseminating information about invasive hydrilla and exploring management options for the future. Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or ideas, you may reach out to me at 860-929-8021 or rdrozdenko@ctriver.org.
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Chris	Balfanz	199 Stockade Rd.	I think the right venue is the key for a large mural. I think a mural on the High School gymnasium or Boathouse locations might support the proper perspective for representations of historically significant person(s) - but not the historic district (town hall) or public library locations mentioned. I'm not sure how visible it would be unless with existing lighting, but under the Rt 3 highway bridge on Main St. might also work. I would hope a unanimous vote could be reached so this mural were a bipartisan decision representing all in the Glastonbury community.
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Iris	Fanning	40 Crossroads Lane	As a resident since 1977, I have been a patron of the Welles Turner Library for all these years. I am thrilled with the many changes that the new director has introduced since she was hired. There are many interesting programs for adults and children; fact-filled emails sent out; and a more welcoming atmosphere as one enters the library. However, I feel that the library has functioned with a lack of staff for too long a time! When I often am at the library, I've noticed there will be 3 or 4 carts filled with books waiting to be shelved. This should not be happening! I sincerely hope the town will give added funds to the library so that more staff can be hired to bring the library programs to the height they deserve!
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Ethan Pelletier 15 Coralberry Lane

Recently, I read an article in the Hartford Courant about declining numbers of volunteer firefighters. I know that Glastonbury has volunteer firefighters. I do not know the extent of how many firefighters we employ, but if we are finding that we cannot find people to work for free, perhaps we should compensate firefighters. I don't like that we do not compensate people that risk their lives for us and that we expect people to want to fight fires for free in a time when the economy is not so great for middle and lower class citizens. I will admit my own ignorance to the situation as I do not have the entire picture here, but I think the idea of having a volunteer fire department is becoming outdated, especially as more people are spending more time working to make ends meet. What little time they may have, they are probably either spending with their families, doing chores, and trying to get some relaxation before another day of hard work. It also seems very unfair for towns to only offer volunteer positions when we have people that go through the training of becoming full time firefighters, just to find that they can't find any positions other than nonpaying volunteer positions. I request that the council consider my testimony and understand my position on this issue, thank you for your time. Also, thank you for not killing us with the Real Estate taxes last year and lowering the mill rate, I appreciate that decision very much.

Karen Fecko 24 Vista Ln

I'm Karen Fecko of 24 Vista Ln. Increased attendance at programs, the increasing number of materials borrowed, the greater number of people visiting the library, is clear evidence the hard work and careful planning that went into renovating and expanding Welles Turner Library is paying off. We've built a beautiful, inviting state of the art facility with the potential to give our residents an even bigger bang for their tax dollars; but there is one stumbling block in the way of making the library the place to go for more than just to borrow books. Staffing is that stumbling block. Having worked in six of the state's public libraries over the course of my career, and having been a Glastonbury resident for 38 years, I have long been concerned about Welles Turner's inadequate staff to population ratio. And the 6,000 square foot addition has made that concern even more pressing. Today's public libraries do more than loan books. They're places for meetings, book discussion groups, programs on countless topics, art exhibits, for quiet study, and for many people who don't have access to computers in their own homes. The library is busier than ever; the facility is bigger, but the staffing has essentially remained the same. The present staff does an impressive job of providing services, but they are limited in offering weekend programming. The maker space was included in the design to offer residents opportunities to use state of the art technologies like 3D printers, green screens, and photo enlargers, but there is no one to staff the area on a regular basis. This space has the potential to attract residents to the library who would not ordinarily think of the library as relevant to their interests. To paraphrase the popular quote from Ray Kinsella's book Field of Dreams, "If you staff it adequately, Glastonbury's residents will come". Please increase staffing levels to allow Welles-Turner to better meet the needs and interests of our taxpayers.
