

Roxanne Maher

From: Whit Irwin <whitirwin6@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 11, 2025 11:12 PM
To: Town Council Group
Cc: Roxanne Maher; Fred Allyn, III
Subject: Letter in Lieu of Appearance at the Ledyard Town Administrative Committee meeting of 12 Feb 2025
Attachments: 250211 Ltr to the TC-Flag Policy.pdf

All -

I regret that I cannot attend the Administrative Committee meeting tomorrow. I am working at that time, or I would speak to the Committee yet again. This is a reminder that I remain unwaveringly opposed to your reconsideration of the status quo regarding third party flags over Town Properties. My feelings on this have not changed, and your waiting for time to pass before bringing this topic to the table again is doubly angering. Rest assured I will bring your recalcitrance regarding this fringe matter to public view in the next election cycle.

Whit Irwin

February 11, 2025

Town of Ledyard, Town Council
741 Colonel Ledyard Hwy
Ledyard, CT 06339-1511

To the Town Council of Ledyard:

I believe that you, as an elected body, are making a grave misstep in reconsidering the current town norm regarding the banners to be raised on our town flagpoles. The town council has repeatedly brought this topic to various forums, and by pursuing this matter, you seem to be unwilling to listen to other views. I have stood in front of the Administrative committee and the Town Council a number of times to ensure at least one voice in opposition is actually heard at the meeting. As I am unable to attend the Administrative Committee meeting in any way, I submit this letter with the strongest recommendation to table this topic for the foreseeable future.

Flags raised over our public buildings should be limited to those standards which represent EVERYONE in our community: the National Flag, the State Flag, the Town Flag, Military Service Flags, and the POW/MIA Flag. Any other flags flying over our public properties will be exclusionary of some group, and this is unacceptable for an administration and council which should represent all the people of our town. For those people who wish a flag specifically to promote some cause or collection of people, they can raise those banners on their own properties and promote whatever cause they would like.

Upon no fewer than three occasions, the Council has been advised about the legal exposure in exercising control over third party flags to raise over public properties. In 2022, the City of Boston lost a legal challenge in the Supreme Court on this very issue, costing the City more than \$2,100,000 in legal fees alone, with restitution and penalties still to be awarded for depriving persons of their freedom of expression because that Council exercised control over which flags the City would display. If the exclusionary nature of third party flags alone is not enough to sway the Town Council to table the matter, the risk of legal exposure and monetary penalties should. Ledyard is not a rich town by any means, and the people are already burdened by significant local taxes. It would be a colossal failure of representation to open the Town to this exposure and the potential consequences.

In conclusion and plain language, please let this matter die in committee now and stop bringing it forward to anger Ledyard citizens. Recognize that if the legal consequences do occur, those who advocate for this policy and those members of the Town Council who vote for it should be held personally liable for the costs of litigation and penalties, rather than the Town.

With great caution,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. S. Whitney Irwin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

W. S. Whitney Irwin
2 Winfield Way
Ledyard, CT 06339