

Town of Wethersfield Flag Policy 2-20-24

No flag other than the flags of the United States of America, State of Connecticut, Town of Wethersfield, Connecticut, and the POW/MIA, may be flown or displayed on any properties owned or maintained by the Town of Wethersfield with the following exceptions:

1. Purpose

- A. The Town of Wethersfield establishes the following rules and procedures regarding the display of privately-owned Commemorative or Organizational Flags on the one designated Town flagpole located at Town Hall (505 Silas Deane Highway). No other privately-owned Commemorative or Organizational Flags shall be displayed on any other Town-owned or Town-maintained facility.
- B. In adopting this policy, the Town Council declares that flagpoles owned or maintained by the Town of Wethersfield are not intended to serve as a forum for free expression by the public, but rather as a non-public forum for the display of Commemorative or Organizational Flags authorized by the Town Council as an expression of the Town Council's official sentiments which shall constitute government speech.

2. Process

- A. As expression of the Town's official government speech, the Town Council may authorize the display of a Commemorative or Organizational Flag on the one designated flagpole located at Town Hall (505 Silas Deane Highway).
- B. The Town Council shall only consider a request to display a Commemorative or Organizational Flag if the request is made by a member of the Wethersfield Town Council at a regular or special Town Council meeting.
- C. Each Commemorative or Organizational Flag cannot be flown more than once a year and will be displayed for a period of time that is reasonable or customary for duration of the event or fourteen (14) continuous days. Only one Commemorative or Organizational Flag will be allowed to be displayed during any time period. Commemorative and Organizational Flags must be temporarily donated for the Town's use and be clean, without holes and tears, and be made of an all-weather fabric. Commemorative or Organizational Flags must be the same size or smaller than the United States and Connecticut flags that are flown. The Town will not be responsible for the condition of the Commemorative or Organizational Flag once flown and may dispose of any such flag not picked up within thirty (30) days after it has been flown. The Town will not purchase the Commemorative or Organizational Flags. If any other flag is flown at half-staff, the Commemorative or Organizational Flag will also be flown at half-staff. All flags shall be flown in accordance with the U.S. Flag Code.
- D. A Commemorative or Organizational Flag as defined in this Policy shall mean a flag that is owned by a private individual, group or organization and that identifies with a specific historical event, cause, nation or group of people that the Town Council chooses to honor or commemorate consistent with the Town's mission and priorities. The following are not allowed as Commemorative or Organizational Flags and will not be considered by the Town Council:
 - i. Flags of a particular religious movement or creed to avoid the appearance of Town government endorsing religion or a particular religious movement or creed;

- ii. Flags of a political party to avoid the appearance of Town government, endorsing a political party;
- iii. Flags advocating a certain outcome in an election to avoid the appearance of Town government endorsing an electoral outcome;
- iv. Flags of a commercial organization, to avoid the appearance of Town government endorsing any particular business; and
- v. Flags that enable violence, discrimination, prejudice, or racism, to avoid the appearance of Town government endorsing such actions.

3. Procedure for Commemorative Flag Approval

- A. Requesting Procedure: An individual, group or organization who would like Town Council members to request a Commemorative or Organizational Flag be adopted by the Town shall make a request through the Town Manager's Office, in writing, no less than 30 days prior to the request of when the flag is to be flown. After the request is reviewed by the Town Manager, it will be distributed to all members of the Town Council.
- B. Town Council Procedure: Any Town Council member can choose in his or her own sole discretion to request that the flying of the proposed flag be adopted by the Town Council as the Town's government speech and that it become an item placed on a regular or special meeting agenda. A majority vote of approval of the request by the Town Council members present for that meeting is required to approve the request.

4. Procedure for Flag Lowering

Notification of a flag lowering event shall proceed as follows:

The Town Manager's Office receives the order to lower the United States of America and State of Connecticut flags from the Governor's office via an e-mail alert.

The Town Manager's Office notifies the Public Works Department of the order via e-mail, phone call, or in-person.

The Public Works Department disseminates the order to the appropriate department at each location.

The procedure is repeated when the order is given by the Governor's office to raise the flags back to normal position.

5. Responsibility

The Town Manager's Office is responsible for notifying the Public Works Department who shall be responsible for notifying the parties to physically lower or raise the flags.