

Good Evening, my name is Jennifer Tokarczyk. Tonight I am making public comment as a resident of Southbury and on behalf of the Southbury Democratic Town Committee for which I am the Vice Chair.

At the DTC September 6th meeting, the committee passed a resolution that the DTC would recommend to the Board of Selectmen that they investigate the benefit and feasibility of having an ordinance to prohibit weapons to be brought to public events on town property or to carry weapons inside of town-owned buildings. This resolution is in response to the events in Charlottesville where people felt free to use weapons as a method to intimidate.

One of our members was informed by the Resident State Trooper that a police officer is not allowed to do anything regarding an attendee at an event, like a peace vigil on town property, if they see someone openly carrying a handgun or long gun. They can't even ask to show proof that the person has a valid gun permit. However, if there was a town ordinance that prohibited carrying weapons on town property and it was posted, the police could take appropriate action.

Since state gun laws were tightened in 2013, Connecticut has seen the biggest reduction in reported violent crimes of any state. But without local regulations, a registered gun owner with a permit could be handling a gun only feet from a bunch of kids playing at a town park and the police would have no grounds to question him. The same would be true if someone with a gun were to enter Town Hall.

The Board of Selectmen should direct the First Selectman to discuss this with the Resident State Trooper to confirm the current situation and work with Town Counsel to see what other towns in this area have done regarding this topic. Town Counsel should then be asked to draft an appropriate ordinance for review with the Board of Selectmen.

Other towns in Connecticut that have such an ordinance are Woodbridge, North Branford, East Haven, Naugatuck, Meriden, and Ansonia.

We can regulate where guns are carried and used in our town. This would send a strong message that we care about the safety of Southbury residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to make public comment this evening.

BOS Attachment 10/5/17