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Residents irked by out-of-control college parties

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By COREY SIPE Chronicle Staff Writer MANSFIELD - The issue of college students partying off-campus in residential neighborhoods is not just limited to when the University of Connecticut classes are in session, as a recent out-of-control party illustrates. While some students may go home for a couple days for the holidays, many return to their off-campus housing apartments long before the semester starts - unlike on-campus residents whose dormitories are closed. The wild Dec. 23 party was discussed recently by a town subcommittee charged with tackling the growing problem of students living in residential areas in town. The wild soiree illustrates to many the increasing demand for student housing for college students. This is necessary as the university continues to experience growing pains with its housing inventory and not increasing housing at the same rate as the increase in the number of accepted undergraduate students. Rebecca Shafer, an **Echo Road** resident, told the council the Dec. 23 party was "an animal house, no residents should have to go through. It was a total disruption to the neighborhood." She is the founder of the Mansfield Neighborhood Preservation Association and helped encourage the town council to create an ad hoc committee on rental regulations and enforcement to try to solve these issues. Shafer said the party happened at 55 **Echo Road**, which is a house near the end of a dead-end **road**, currently being rented by three UConn students. "We should use it as a learning (Residents, Page 4) (Continued from Page 1) experience for all of us," she said, referring to how parties should be dealt with. At the ad hoc committee's Jan. 11 meeting, the first meeting after the party happened, Shafer showed photos she took of the 40 vehicles on both sides of the roadway Dec. 23. "People couldn't find parking, so they backed into the end of my driveway to turn around to find another place," she said, adding they also parked in the house's front yard, which is not allowed under the rental housing plan. While normally on-street parking is allowed, the town has a winter parking ban Nov. 1 to April 15 between midnight and 6 a.m. Vehicles were not ticketed or towed that night, she said during the meeting, attributing it to state police troopers who were not familiar with local parking regulations. Shafer said this particular party, which lasted from 10 p. m. to 2 a.m., attracted more than 100 people. "They were very vocal on the back deck, throwing rocks on the ice," she said, adding this is particularly dangerous as people like to skate on the pond there. While police were called, she said officers simply asked them to keep the noise down. According to Shafer, that didn't happen and students were seen urinating in the street and in nearby residents' yards. Shafer said neighbors had to call police a second time for them to have the party disperse. During the meeting, Shafer said she thinks police should intervene earlier so nearby residents do not need to monitor the situation and protect their property by confronting intoxicated students. At the meeting, Shafer said, while police had students pick up beer cans and liquor bottles strewn along the street, after officers left students yelled insults to neighbors after the party ended. Shafer said in order for the university to discipline students for not following the code of conduct off-campus, it must be documented. "Hamden collects tenants names on their landlord rental registration forms and Mansfield should do the same," Shafer said, adding Hamden is the host town to Quinnipiac University. Mansfield Town Manager Matthew Hart said the party "speaks to the need to increase police resources," during financially challenging times.

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