

Executive Board

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Downtown Wooster Square Community Management Team, Executive Board
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18 May 2017

President Tyisha Walker
New Haven Board of Alders
165 Church Street
New Haven, Connecticut 06510

Dear President Walker,

The Downtown Wooster Square Community Management Team (DWSCMT) respectfully requests that an Aldermanic Committee hold a hearing on enabling the city to enforce city ordinances related to public space requirements, such as shoveling sidewalks and not leaving bulk trash on the sidewalk. The DWS Livable Cities Initiative Specialist leaves violators of such ordinances notes, hoping they will comply with the law, but has no enforcement power. Her efforts therefore have limited impact.

The absence of an enforcement mechanism has two important implications for the city:

1. There is no deterrent to violating ordinances, to the detriment of public spaces and the public (e.g., dangerous and hard to navigate unshoveled sidewalks, bulk trash cluttering neighborhoods, etc.); and
2. The city is losing out on a potentially significant source of revenue. At a budget workshop on April 6, 2017, a representative from Public Works testified that the fine for most public space violations is \$250 and there are a significant number of violations each year.

It is our understanding that the fines are not enforceable because there is no adjudicatory process in place, and so if someone contests a fine, the person does not have to pay. It seems like it should not be difficult to set up an adjudicatory process. Perhaps such a process could be combined with an existing system (e.g., traffic fine hearings), to avoid duplication of effort.

We encourage the city to explore such possibilities, in part by looking at what other municipalities do to get examples of best practices. This will help New Haven financially and, perhaps more significantly, will make New Haven a more inviting place to live, work, and visit, with all the ancillary benefits that brings with it.

Thank you for considering our request. We know how busy the Board of Alders is, and so greatly appreciate your consideration of this issue. Please let us know if you have any questions at info@dwscmt.net or 858-336-9614.

Sincerely,

The Executive Board of the Downtown Wooster Square Community Management Team

