

My name is Jennifer Stannard and I have been a Stamford resident for 25 years. My son was educated in Stamford. I have been on the staff of Stamford's unit of the US Naval Sea Cadet Corps for 20 of those years and am the Commanding Officer of the unit at this time.

We are the longest continuously running unit in New England and, were the first Navy League cadet unit in New England. (We operate two programs- Sea Cadets age 14 – 17 and League Cadets age 10 – 13).

Over a thousand young men & women have come through the doors of the Maritime Center on Magee Ave.

Why am I still here when my son graduated from the program 15 years ago? I have seen the impact this program has had- Amazing! It is well worth my time and energy to give back to the community in this manner.

We are a program committed to developing the leaders of tomorrow- providing maritime, seamanship and leadership training. We have been the #1 unit in Southern New England for the past 4 years and, 16 out of the last 20. The cadets standardly take 1st place in New England Unit competitions on the field and, in Swim Meets. A more diverse socioeconomic group would be hard to find. We represent the face of Stamford, names like Alvarez, Ceci, O'Brien, de la Rivera, Welborn and Villard, many are first generation Americans.

Approximately 20% of our cadets move on to military service, 95% go on to college- many aided by scholarships from our sponsoring organization, the Navy League of the US, the national Naval Sea Cadet Corp program or our unit.

To remove the current facility will significantly change the character of the community. It has been a hub for activities focused on Stamford's marine heritage- the Navy League and Naval Sea Cadets being tantamount to that.

Our space has been taken over bit by bit by the City and now, it appears the building will be razed. This while we are growing.

This youth program, totally staffed by volunteers and funded by donations from the Navy League, former cadet parents and concerned citizens is a hidden jewel.

The young men and women experience opportunities aboard ship, they meet dignitaries and interact with the Navy, Coast Guard and other branches of the military. City of Stamford firefighters train the cadets in firefighting.

Our roots are in Stamford. Our cadets are among you as EMT's, firefighters, bankers, librarians and teachers not to mention those who have served and are now serving in our military- Pilots, Navy Seals, Marines, Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen.

Ours is a tradition of honor, commitment, responsibility and accountability. We impress upon the cadets the need to give back to the community. I know that the Mayor and Governor recognize the benefit of our program and support our efforts in training the young people of Stamford and the surrounding area as they have each told me so.

It was a surprise to me to read the document outlining the responsibilities of the developers: a contribution to fireworks and repairs/improvement to the parks and dog pound. Now I love dogs, growing up we always had a dog but to specify required improvements for the animal shelter while leaving the Sea Cadets homeless shocked me. (Do we care more for our dogs than our children?)

Before the meeting last week Ms. Aubuchon approached me about a potential site and the next day we viewed the site. It will not meet our needs but I am pleased that the conversation has begun regarding appropriate space.

I trust that the City of Stamford will show the same attributes that we traditionalize through our program and continue the commitment made to the United States Navy when the City of Stamford took over the building, which was to house the Naval Sea Cadet program and other maritime related programs.