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Downtown Darien's About to Look Different — with Lamppost Flags Starting Around Memorial Day

Author : David Gurliacci

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Downtown Darien is expected to get a lot more redder, whiter and bluer starting just about on Memorial Day this year with a gift of American flags just accepted by the town Board of Selectmen.

David Hawes, a town resident, presented a proposal to the board on Monday for him and others to give the town about 80 flags to be attached high up on lampposts along the Post Road between Sedgwick and Hecker Avenues.

"It's a really, really wonderful and very generous idea," First Selectman Jayme Stevenson told him.

"Well, I couldn't have don it without help from Ring's End [Lumber] and Hollow Tree Self Storage," Hawes replied. Both businesses are helping with the project, he said.

Hawes told the selectmen on Monday that he's noticed the flags over the Saugatuck River Bridge in downtown Westport, "and, well, I got jealous." Here in Darien, he said, "We can do more and do a better job at commemorating Memorial Day and honoring all those who have gone before us and sacrificed."

So he came up with the idea of putting flags on the town's lampposts along the Post Road downtown. He talked about the idea with others, he said, "and I have several people who have already volunteered to help do the installation." They'll both put them up and later take them down, he said — town employees won't have to do a thing, and the town won't have to pay for it.

The total cost of the gift is roughly \$3,400, paid for by Hawes and some others, with help from Ring's End Lumber and Hollow Tree Self Storage. The gift includes brackets to attach to the town-owned poles and short poles from which the flags will hang.

The Board of Selectmen is empowered to accept gifts on behalf of the town if the value of the gift is under \$10,000 (more than that and the Representative Town Meeting is required to accept the gift). The proposal initially was for \$4,400, but Hawes said he later found he could buy part of the items at wholesale rates for about \$1,000 less than he initially estimated.

Hawes said he wanted to get the flags up by Memorial Day (May 29) and suggested keeping the flags up until Independence Day, but Stevenson suggested having the flags up possibly as long as Veterans Day, an idea Hawes said sounded fine.

The flags shouldn't interfere with the flower pots that the Darien Chamber of Commerce and Darien Men's Club hang from downtown lampposts, he said.

Hawes said he expected to install the brackets on the poles first, perhaps in about two weeks, then add the flags later. Stevenson told Hawes he should consult with town Department of Public Works officials before doing any installation work, in part to make sure nothing interfered with the DPW's job of maintenance and changing of light bulbs on the lampposts.

"How 'bout Tilley [Pond Park]?" Stevenson suggested.

"That would be great," Hawes said.

The board voted unanimously to accept the gift.