

LET'S RECOGNIZE BLOOMFIELD'S GREEN THUMBS! DEADLINE IS AUGUST 15



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colorful gardens, and inviting storefronts can reduce stress, improve mental well-being, and encourage outdoor activity and social interaction.

- **Increasing Property Values:** Well-kept landscapes and attractive properties contribute to higher property values throughout the town. This benefits not only the property owners themselves but also the entire community.
- **Attracting Businesses**

and Visitors: A beautiful Bloomfield is an attractive Bloomfield. Businesses are more likely to thrive in an aesthetically pleasing environment, and visitors are more inclined to explore and spend time in areas that are cared for and inviting. This can lead to increased economic activity and a stronger local economy. Isn't that what we want for our town?

- **Promoting Environmental Health:** Thoughtful landscaping often incorporates

native plants, pollinator gardens, and sustainable practices that contribute to a healthier local ecosystem. These efforts can improve air quality, support local wildlife, and enhance our natural environment.

The Bloomfield Beautification Committee carefully judges nominated properties based on criteria such as neatness, creativity, color harmony, plant health, plant and tree selections, and overall visual effect. Their

Judges look for landscapes that have eye and seasonal appeal, utilize plant materials or hardscapes creatively, and are free of weeds and litter.

Don't let these inspiring efforts go unnoticed! Take a moment to nominate a deserving residence or business that makes Bloomfield a more beautiful place to live, work, and visit.

Submitting your nomination is easy! Simply visit

<https://www.bloomfieldct.gov/856/BBC-Notable-Landscape-Awards>

and fill out the online form. Remember, the deadline is August 15th. Winners will be announced in September.

"Come Bloom with Us!" Let's work together to acknowledge and encourage the floral landscapes that make Bloomfield a truly notable town!

NOMINATE YOUR FAVORITE 2025 CURBSIDE GARDEN IN BLOOMFIELD BY AUGUST 15TH!

EASY: FILL OUT NOMINATION FORM ON BLMFLD TOWN WEBSITE AND CLICK SEND!

Bloomfield Beautification Notable Landscape Awards encourage and promote community involvement and pride in keeping our town a beautiful place to live!

NOMINATION FORM

<https://tinyurl.com/notablelandscape25>



bbc@bloomfieldct.gov

OPINIONS AND LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

I never imagined I'd have to share this publicly. But after seeing misleading statements from former Bloomfield Councilman Rickford Kirton and knowing he's running for office again, I feel I have no choice. The community deserves the truth. Especially now.

No one takes joy in filing a workplace complaint. I certainly didn't. But when someone crosses a line in an unwelcome and inappropriate way that makes you feel unsafe at work, you speak up.

That's exactly what I did. Quietly. Through the proper channels. Because accountability should apply to everyone, no matter their title.

The first incident with Mr. Kirton happened before I worked for the Town. In October 2021, I was hosting a birthday party for my twin daughters at Elizabeth's Restaurant in Bloomfield. I stepped into the bar area to speak with the owner. Mr. Kirton was sitting at the bar and struck up a conversation with me. I had just moved to Bloomfield and didn't know who he was. He introduced himself as a councilman and struck up some small talk asking if I would vote for him and what I

was doing at the restaurant. He then asked if he could buy me a drink. I declined, explaining that I was there for my daughters' birthday and wasn't drinking. He then asked if I'd go out for a drink sometime. I declined again, trying to keep it light, saying I assumed he must be married with children. He replied that I was "old-fashioned." That comment-his tone-made me uncomfortable. I excused myself when the owner came over, and I left the conversation.

Before I walked away, he gave me his business card and told me to friend him on Facebook. I did, but shortly after, I blocked him. His behavior didn't sit right with me. I just wanted distance.

I hoped that would be the end of it.

I was hired by the Town of Bloomfield in August 2022 as a Senior Administrative Assistant to the Town Manager. I had no regular contact with Mr. Kirton and assumed he didn't remember me until one day he came into the Town Manager's Office, saw me, and said something to the effect of, "Oh you, you are here." I didn't respond and continued working.

On October 26, 2022, I attended a groundbreaking

event for the Tellus II project. As I was leaving, I was walking and talking with another woman when Mr. Kirton came up from behind us. Without warning, he threw his arm around my shoulder and said to the woman beside me,

"Did you know, she's my secret crush?"

I froze. This wasn't friendly. It wasn't professional. And it certainly wasn't appropriate. I had barely spoken to him. I shrugged him off and started walking faster to get away. I was embarrassed. Uncomfortable. Shaken. This happened in public, with others nearby. It was demeaning.

A few days later, I filed a formal complaint.

The Town took it seriously. They brought in an independent investigator who interviewed all parties. She concluded that Mr. Kirton did, in fact, put his arm around me and made the "secret crush" comment. She found my account credible, truthful, and consistent. She found his behavior inappropriate and out of bounds.

Mr. Kirton was mandated by the Town to complete sexual harassment training, re-review the Town's policy, and had been formally warned that any future

violations would result in more serious action.

I have come to learn that he refused to sign the acknowledgment, and he refused to attend the mandated training.

I didn't go public. I didn't do interviews. I followed protocol. I wanted to move on. But when I read Mr. Stacom's article with Mr. Kirton's version of events-minimizing what happened and denying things I know to be true - I realized I couldn't stay silent any longer.

This is not political. This is personal. I have no political agenda. I'm not running for anything. I just want to do my job in a safe, respectful environment.

We all deserve to work in an environment where boundaries are honored and people in power are held accountable-not protected by spin. When a public official behaves inappropriately, denies it happened, and refuses even the most basic accountability, it sends a message that women in government should stay quiet.

I won't.

I've been subjected to misinformation, personal attacks, and public attempts to undermine my character. But the facts matter. The truth matters. This wasn't a misunderstanding. It was

not "friendly." And it wasn't okay.

The facts are clear. The investigation was thorough. I told the truth. And I refuse to be shamed for it. If we want a culture of accountability, it has to apply to everyone. That's why I'm speaking up now. Not for attention. But because truth still matters. Silence enables repetition. And while speaking up comes with risks-risks to my job, my safety, and my reputation-I'm doing it anyway. I fear retaliation. I fear for my future. But more than that, I fear what it would mean if Mr. Kirton were allowed to return to office without accountability or remorse. What message does that send to other women who work with him?

I'm coming forward now because the truth matters. And because no one should have to feel unsafe at work.

Annatouchur Kingland
Senior Administrative Assistant to Town Manager
Town of Bloomfield

[Ed. Note: We publish this letter because last week we published Mr. Kirton's side of the issue, and because Ms. Kingland has decided to publicly disclose her identity.]