

ANNUAL REPORT

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

FISCAL YEAR 1973 - 1974

Anthony Sbona, Mayor
Donald M. Russell, Chairman
Jerome M. Levin
Kent M. Scully
Norman J. Daniels
David A. Bengtson

September, 1974

PURPOSE

Created by Resolution on May 5, 1969, the Municipal Development Committee is established as a standing committee of the Common Council to "study, evaluate and recommend to the Mayor and Common Council such development programs and priorities as are deemed necessary and desirable to promote the social, cultural, educational, physical, industrial, recreational and commercial improvement of the City of Middletown". The authority of the committee was further defined by Resolution of the Common Council dated April 6, 1970, wherein it was stated that the committee shall "coordinate the ongoing and future activities of all City agencies, authorities, departments, committees and commissions and development and construction programs". Finally, the Common Council in September, 1971, designated the committee as the Community Development Action Plan Agency pursuant to Section 8-207 of the General Statutes. In this role, the committee renders advisory opinions on the consistency of applications with the CDAP plan as approved by the City and Department of Community Affairs.

In general, the Municipal Development Committee functions as a body which prepares and screens programs of a developmental nature before going to the Common Council floor.

Municipal Development Committee, WMC Coordinator

OPEN SPACE

During the past fiscal year, the City's open space inventory increased significantly through three major land acquisitions. In spring, 1974, the City acquired a 50-acre tract formerly owned by Charles and Edna Kennedy lying between Country Club Road and Plumb Road. ~~Applications for financial assistance are currently pending with the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Department of Interior, and the Department of Environmental Protection.~~

Through an open space grant administered by the ^{HUD} ~~Department of Housing and Urban Development~~, the City acquired 23 acres of the Muriel McCormick Hubbard estate lying adjacent to the ~~Bertram~~ Spencer Elementary School.

~~Finally~~, the City of Middletown was the recipient of a gift of 30 acres of land from Ernest and Luella McCutcheon lying along Margarite Road and north of Livingston Road, abutting the Crystal Lake Park complex.

Throughout the year, the Municipal Development Committee: oversaw the final negotiations and acquisition of a small piece of land formerly owned by the Preston family, now a part of the Pat Kidney Field area; reviewed the progress and plans leading to the development of the Elderly Plaza and improvements at Traverse Square and Maplewood Terrace; and, has kept abreast of developments in the HUD financed MacDonough Project.

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES

~~In this fiscal year, several major actions occurred which will enhance the downtown area of Middletown as an economic center. Working with the Parking Authority under the provisions of Special Act 82 of the 1971 Connecticut General Assembly, the City negotiated for, and purchased from, the James H. Bunce Company a major parking facility plus four accessory structures. The Parking Authority is currently working on designs to integrate that land with Fagan Avenue and offer it as a partially free parking area to be administered by the Authority.~~

The Municipal Development Committee, in late spring and summer of 1974, began discussions of converting Main Street from its present character to that of a semi-mall by working with the Redevelopment Agency, Planning and Zoning Commission and business community. The preliminary thinking of the Committee would transform that portion of Main Street between Washington Street and the South Green into a beautified commercial area as a part of Middletown's changing image in the downtown area.

OTHER ACTIONS

The Municipal Development Committee has continued to work toward the disposition of excess and obsolete structures now under City control. The City entered into an agreement with the Junior Womens Club of Middletown to lease the former Dunklee House at 717 Newfield Street for conversion into a children's museum.

After working with the United States Postal Service over a two-year period, agreements were reached for the sale of the former Hubbard School site on Silver Street to the Postal Service for \$85,500.00. This site will be the location of the new Middletown Post Office, which has been sought for approximately fifteen years. In conjunction therewith, the Municipal Development Committee, through the Public Works Department, put the portable classrooms at the Hubbard school site to bid and had them removed.

After approximately one year of negotiations with the Westfield Fire District, the Municipal Development Committee agreed to lease the former Westfield Elementary School property to the fire district in order to facilitate expansion of the District's facilities which have become necessary due to the rapid growth in the Westfield portion of the City. Details of that agreement will be reached in fiscal 1974-1975.

~~The old Middletown High School at Court and Pearl Streets was put to~~

bid but attracted only one bidder which was rejected. As of the end of the fiscal year, the property is still in the hands of the City and under study for potential disposition. In a similar fashion, the Staddle Hill School was put to bid and an offer was tentatively accepted from the Ancient Order of Hibernians. However, the Hibernians attempt to gain Planning and Zoning approval failed, thus, the building is still on the City's inventory.

Involvement in the progress of the Sawmill Brook Industrial Park continued during the fiscal year with the Municipal Development Committee approving the repurchase of the 40-acre tract formerly owned by the Emhart Corporation. The Committee also approved the purchase by InFORM of acreage from Rosalie Otto and a gift of approximately two acres of land from that purchase.

Acting as the CDAP Agency, the Committee approved an application of the Redevelopment Agency for \$2,041,140.00 and another application of the Housing Authority for \$64,514.32.

Respectfully submitted,



William M. Kushn, Jr.
Municipal Development Coordinator

WMK/th