

ANNUAL REPORT - 1979-80

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE -- William M. Kuehn, Jr., Coordinator

Municipal Development Committee, Sebastian W. Gallitto, Chairman

During the fiscal 1979-1980, the Municipal Development Committee continued to deal with a range of development matters in the Committee's role as a clearinghouse in recommending body to the Common Council. Following are some highlights of the Committee's activities:

- The Committee regularly monitored the progress of the construction of Industrial Park Road. While day to day construction supervision was under the jurisdiction of the Public Works Department, the Municipal Development Committee was responsible for and dealt with several requests for contractual modifications for engineering services.
- The Committee heard final detailed reports and recommendations from Storch Engineers concerning the long range uses of Palmer Field, Vets Park and Pat Kidney Field. The consultants offered a variety of potential improvements to these three facilities which can be phased over a period of time in order to maximize the usefulness of each facility in order to better serve the City's residents.
- After thorough consideration, the Committee recommended that the City contribute \$5,000.00 for a feasibility study of the State Armory on Main Street for a reuse as a museum.
- The Committee paid particular attention to updating a list of future capital projects for the City should funding sources develop. As a result, the City was able to respond to a request

for proposals for funding under the State Urban Act Program. Four such proposals were submitted including continued Main Street Modernization, development of off-street parking at Palmer Field, the restoration of the North End Meetinghouse, and additional improvements to Harborpark.

- In response for a request for proposals for the use of 701 Planning funds, the Committee recommended in May, 1980, that an application be submitted for an economic development study.
- The Committee dealt with numerous transportation related items including: funding for intersection improvements at Court and High, College and High and Court and Main Streets; a request from the Middletown Transit District for a two-story brick structure behind City Hall for the Transit Terminal Project; concern for the maintenance of public plantings along City streets, particularly deKoven Drive, St. John's Circle and Main Street; the approval of a supplemental agreement for consulting services to the deKoven Drive Urban Systems Project; and, recommending the initiation of detailed consulting studies for the creation of a off-street parking area bounded by College, Court, Main and Broad Streets.

Inland Wetlands And Water Courses Agency -- John F. McCormack, Chairman

The Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Agency is charged with protecting and controlling development in and along those areas of the community which are designated as wetlands by the Soil Conservation Service in accordance of Public Act 155 of the 1972 General Assembly as amended. During the past fiscal year, the Agency met

on thirteen occasions which included several public hearings.

Following is a summary of it's actions:

Permits granted - 8

Public Hearings - 2

Permits Denied - 2

In addition to the permit activity, the Inland Wetlands Agency monitored other developments and problem areas with regard to regulation compliance. These included, but are not limited to: the North Hills PRD; the South Main Street area near Jackson Chevrolet; Butler Construction; and, Bishop's Junkyard. The last matter resulted in the issuance of a cease and desist and inter-municipal cooperation between officials in Meriden and Middletown to correct the problems.

As a result of the General Assembly passing Public Act 79-285, the Agency amended it's regulations to require that a public hearing fee of \$25.00 accompany each application determined to require a public hearing. The Agency also was concerned with and responded to the direction of the Administration in creating a Code Enforcement Authority and the establishment of a Storm Water Ordinance.

Harbor Improvement Agency -- Edward J. Dzialo, Jr., Chairman

The Agency is charged with the responsibility of planning and implementing development activities along the Connecticut River shoreline within the City. In June, 1979, Harborpark was formally dedicated. The most recent fiscal year was spent in refining the project area with additional facilities and, further, in encouraging and devel-

oping activities to take place at Harborpark.

A sampling of refinements to the project which were authorized during 1979-80 fiscal year include: provision of electricity to the southern gazebo for the Summer Concert series; installation of a telephone at the northerly parking lot; procurement of a flag with the Harborpark logo; installation of lights in the tunnel under Route 9; installation of a mirror on the Courthouse side of the tunnel; authorization for procurement of directional signs leading to Harborpark; and, installation of buried electric lines to allow for a variety of cultural activities.

Harborpark was also graced with the planting of 9,000 daffodil bulbs - a gift from the Rockfall Corporation and the Middletown Garden Club. In Spring, 1980, the project area was ablaze in yellow, much to the delight of City residents.

During the fiscal year, the former Yacht Club building and Old Power Plant structure were given considerable attention. In late 1979, a developer had been designated for a restaurant in the Yacht Club; however, he had to withdraw due to rapidly increasing interest rates for commercial ventures. Using grant funds from the Connecticut Commission on the Arts, the City also studied the potential of converting the Power Plant into a live arts theatre. The report indicated that such a project was feasible; however, construction funding still remains a problem.

The Mayor formally identified the Park and Recreation Department as being responsible for the management and maintenance of Harborpark. Uncompleted portions of the project are still the responsibility of the Harbor Improvement Agency.

During the year many activities were scheduled including recreation programs by the Park and Recreation Department, Showcase V, the Head of the Connecticut Regatta, Easter Sunrise Services, the Summer Concert series and other special events sponsored by the Arts and Cultural Commission.

After some four years of working toward the creation of Town Farms Park, the Agency was met with some disappointment with the discovery of a vast underground water supply at that location. The City's Water Commission had been searching for several years for new sources of domestic water supply and had decided to test the site. The results showed a sizable aquifer yielding up to two million gallons per day. In the interest of maintaining an adequate supply of fresh water, the plans for Town Farms Park were dropped and the Water Commission agreed to restore and landscape the area in a manner consistent with the other riverfront properties of the Water and Sewer Department.

As the fiscal year closed, the Agency still counted uncompleted several projects - reuse of the Yacht Club building, the reuse of the Power Plant building, installation of a replacement boat launching facility and provision of a pedestrian walkway over Route 9. In Spring, 1980, an application was submitted to the State of Connecticut under the Urban Act Program for funding of a pedestrian bridge and for the conversion of the Yacht Club. As of the end of the fiscal year, the Yacht Club application was still open as a possibility for State financial assistance.

Main Street Modernization Committee, Paul P. Parisi, Chairman

The Main Street Modernization Committee was created as a building committee for the purpose of implementing sidewalk improvements between St. John's Square and College Street.

The fiscal year was one of continuous construction activity by the DeMatteo Construction Company in the replacement of sidewalks north of Washington Street. The Committee met on a monthly basis to review progress and to consider necessary changes to the construction contract.

At the close of the fiscal year, the construction project was nearing completion and the Committee's activities were winding down with the feeling of much being accomplished.

Vacant Buildings Study Committee, Sebastian W. Gallitto, Chairman

Authorized by Common Council in response to a need for a standing committee to deal with surplus properties, the Vacant Buildings Study Committee first met on January 28, 1980 and set it's sights on two former school buildings - Stillman School on Loveland Street and Central School on College Street. After securing appraisals for each of the structures, the Committee advertised the availability of Central School through the creation of a developer's kit and advertising in State and Regional newspapers and trade journals.

The Committee also dealt with the vacant Long Hill School and recommended that it be conveyed to the Housing Authority for eventual demolition in the provision of additional elderly housing units on that site.

At the close of the fiscal year, the Committee was prepared to open bids of developer interest for Central School and had recommended that the former Stillman School be converted to a Municipal Annex for Human Service Agencies. This recommendation was, in fact, later adopted by the Common Council.

The Vacant Buildings Study Committee is a standing committee to deal with any buildings which may be considered surplus property by any department in the City of Middletown.

Citizens Advisory Committee, Gary Genovese, Chairman

The Citizens Advisory Committee is appointed by the Mayor and is responsible for recommending to the Common Council matters regarding the Community Development Block Grant Program.

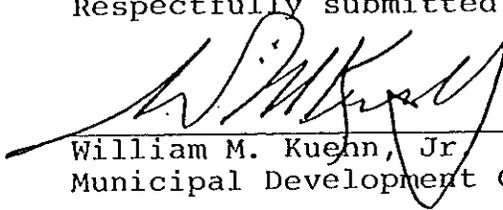
Following are highlights from the year's activities:

- Following the submission of a full application for a 1979 Small Cities Grant, Middletown was awarded \$600,000.00 for a Comprehensive Community Development Program.
- The City was invited to file a full application in early 1980 for \$250,000.00 of additional Small Cities Funds.
- Using Community Development Block Grant Funds, the City produced a booklet entitled "Mainly Middletown" which highlights accomplishments in the Community Development area and serves as a promotion piece for the City of Middletown.
- Numerous contracts were signed during the year, including: Section 312 Rehabilitation Program Administrative contracts with the Greater Middletown Community Corporation; Housing

Cooperative contracts with the Equity in Housing of Middletown, Inc. and Greater Middletown Community Corporation; and, several contracts with the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust for architectural advice in rehabilitation matters.

- During the year, the City initiated a lump sum drawdown process which enabled the City to receive sizable funds designated for Middletown and place them in advance of their use with the Liberty Bank for Savings for the accruing of interest until such time as they are expended for rehabilitation activities.
- Because the completion activities of the Metro-South Renewal Project are funded through the Community Development Block Grant Program, the Committee receives regular status reports from the Redevelopment Agency staff. Redevelopment activity was on the upswing during 1980 as evidenced by heavy draw-downs from the Federal Depository.
- The popularity of the Residential Rehabilitation Program was such during the year that the City had a constant problem of not enough money to meet individual requests. The Application Review Committee had to be very careful in selecting only the most needy applicants due to the shortage of funds.

Respectfully submitted:



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William M. Kuenn, Jr  
Municipal Development Coordinator

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