

ANNUAL REPORT - 1980-1981

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

Municipal Development Committee, Sebastian W. Gallitto, Chairman

During the fiscal year, the Committee dealt with numerous development matters in the Committee's role as a clearinghouse for action by the Common Council.

Following are some highlights of the Committee's activities:

- The Committee closely monitored the construction of the Industrial Park Road extension and saw to the administrative details in completing the project.
- In July, 1980, the Committee formally received a consultant's report containing an analyses and recommendations for Palmer Field, Vets Park and Pat Kidney Field.
- Recognizing that the Main Street Modernization program and the Metro South Urban Renewal program provided financing for changing all traffic signals along Main Street except for the intersection of Court and Main Streets, the Committee provided design funds for the upgrading of that intersection. Subsequent studies showed the need for improving the traffic signal functions at Court and High Streets and High and College Streets. These, too, were funded for design and, subsequently, included in a package to the State of Connecticut for inclusion in the Urban Systems Program.
- In response to a request by several residents of Old Mill Road, the Committee initiated the vacating of an old, undeveloped easement in order that it

could be formally used for residential purposes.

- Aware that Middletown's "front door" is along Route 9, the Committee sought to improve the esthetic appearance of the downtown. To that end, funds were appropriated and bids sought for the planting of four hundred (400) bushes along deKoven Drive.
- With the designation of the former Stillman Elementary School as a Municipal Annex for City functions, the Committee dealt with the need to provide funds for an architectural study of the building and for its roof repair.
- Perhaps the biggest challenge to the Committee during the year was in providing City guidance in restoring the Danforth Pewter Shop on a site near South Green. With the aid of a State Grant, the City and the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust purchased the building and placed it into storage until such time as a site could be secured and plans and specifications prepared for the erection of this, the last remaining Colonial pewter shop in Connecticut.

Inland Wetland 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 with Public Act 155 of the 1972 General Assembly as amended.

During the fiscal year, the Agency met on ten (10) occasions. Following is the summary of its actions: permits granted - 18; permits denied - 2; and,

public hearings - 4.

The number of applications before the Agency was up 100% over the previous year. Several were particularly difficult and point to the need for better information concerning Middletown's inland wetlands. Largely through the efforts of the Public Works Department, the City of Middletown has under contract a consultant who is conducting a comprehensive study of the drainage areas within the City and a re-evaluation of all the inland wetlands. The end result will be a series of two hundred and forty (240) maps at 1" = 100' showing all wetlands, flood-prone areas, drainage structures and other critical information which will be used to evaluate any water related developments in the City of Middletown.

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

The Agency is responsible for the development of City owned land along the Connecticut River. With a goal of creating a restaurant within Harborpark, the Agency concentrated many of its activities toward setting the stage for seeking developer interest. Additionally, the Agency cared to numerous administrative and development details of Harborpark. For example, the Public Works and Police Departments aided in erecting directional signs to Harborpark throughout the downtown. Additionally, rules and regulations were drawn and printed with the efforts of the Commission on the Arts and Park and Recreation Department. New lights were installed in the tunnel under Route 9, oaken bumpers were installed on the bulkhead and modifications were made to improve handicapped accessibility throughout Harborpark.

The Agency also began its negotiations with the State Department of Transportation for the leasing of a strip of land on the westerly side of Water Street for support parking. The crew docking system had been under heavy use for three (3) years by high school and college crews; therefore, an overhaul of the system was done with Public Works carpenters and Wesleyan University staff.

The greatest single accomplishment came with the announcement of the State Department of Economic Development that the City had been approved for a \$100,000 grant for the rehabilitation of the Yacht Club building. This announcement triggered the preparation of a developer's kit for advertising during the Summer of 1981. This grant, together with the promise of a lease on Water Street became critical ingredients in the developer's kit.

During the past year, Harborpark became the scene of numerous activities. Summer concerts were held on the banks of the Connecticut River; Showcase VI, like its successor was staged in Harborpark; regattas, including the annual Head of the Connecticut Regatta, were held; and, on October 5, 1980, the City joined with the sponsors of a major industrial development convention in Hartford to provide a concert and fireworks.

1980-81 was the second full year since the dedication of Harborpark. It is with a great sense of accomplishment that the facility becomes increasingly used and appreciated by the citizens of Middletown.

Vacant Buildings Study Committee, Sebastian W. Gallitto, Chairman

This Committee was created by the Common Council in response to a need for an

agency to deal with surplus City properties. With the former Stillman Elementary School resolved during the previous fiscal year, the Committee turned its attention in 1980-81 to the Central Middle School. At the beginning of the year, proposals were opened for developer interest. Based upon a presentation made before the Committee, it was recommended to the Common Council that the developer team of Caldarelli/Interbartolo Associates be approved for the conversion of the Central Middle School into condominium units.

In early 1981, the Common Council designated the Vacant Buildings Study Committee to oversee the rehabilitation process of the Stillman Municipal Annex. City staff interviewed consultants and toward the end of the year made a recommendation for an architect who would be working with the Committee in preparing plans, specifications and alternatives for the upgrading of the Stillman Annex.

Economic Development Task Force, Ralph H. Shaw, II, Chairman

The Task Force was created by the Common Council on September 2, 1980 to "assess current economic development efforts, study available resources, prioritize economic development goals and recommend methods for implementing planned and orderly economic growth". The nine (9) member Task Force comprised of a variety of business, government and education interests, met on twelve occasions in a nine month period and with the assistance of a consultant, developed a draft report entitled "Economic Development Strategies". The Committee's initial task was to assess the assets and liabilities of the

City as a background against which to frame development objectives to be implemented through a variety of action programs. The three objectives indentified are: 1) increase the City's tax base; 2) increase the viability of the Central Business District; and, 3) reduce the number of unemployed persons in the local labor force. In considering these objectives, recommendations were prepared for continued development in the Sawmill Brook Industrial Area, additional downtown development and restoration, the provision of new housing opportunities and the linking of job training programs to employment opportunities. The Task Force also dealt with a delivery system which recognizes the existing political and personnel structures within the City of Middletown. It is the Task Force's intent to present this material to the Common Council as an action plan for the 1980's.

Citizens Advisory Committee, Gary Genovese, Chairman

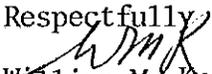
The Citizens Advisory Committee is responsible for making recommendations to the Mayor and Common Council regarding Community Development Block Grant Programs. Following are the highlights from this year's activities:

- The City signed a contract with the Department of Housing and Urban Development for \$350,000 in 1980 Small Cities funds.
- With recommendations from the Citizens Advisory Committee, major amendments to the Citizens Participation Plan were adopted by the Common Council.
- In June, 1981, the Common Council adopted a Fair Housing Ordinance.
- The City signed an agreement with the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust

to prepare all the necessary documentation for the creation of a historic district in the North End of Main Street.

- The Ferry/Green Street parking lot, at the close of the fiscal year, was ready for demolition and construction activities with all the project tenants having been relocated.
- A lump sum drawdown agreement was signed with the Liberty Bank for Savings and approved by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in September, 1980. This agreement allows the City to make large deposits of HUD funds in the local institution which will accrue interest, thus generating additional rehabilitation dollars.
- The Housing Cooperative program moved into high gear with the acquisition, rehabilitation of additional properties.
- With the aid of a Wesleyan student intern, a report was prepared in order that a greater understanding of the Housing Assistance Plan may be gained.
- Numerous contracts were signed during the year including: agreements with the Housing Authority for an air conditioning system and security system at Sbona Towers; an agreement with Community Action for Greater Middletown for additional construction at the Child Development Center; a series of agreements involving Equity in Housing, Inc. and Greater Middletown Community Corporation for the continuation of the Housing Cooperative program; Rehabilitation Administration contracts with the Greater Middletown Community Corporation; and, a contract with the Community Health Center for the provision of space for its medical activities.

Respectfully submitted:


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