

ANNUAL REPORT - 1981-1982

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

Municipal Development Committee, Vincent J. Loffredo, Chairman

During the course of the fiscal year, the Committee dealt with numerous matters in its continuing role as a clearinghouse for action by the Common Council. Following are some highlights of the Committee's activities:

- . In an effort to stimulate development interest and activity in the North End of the Central Business District, the Committee recommended the Middlesex Realty Holding Company as developer of a vacant parcel of land situated on the easterly side of Main Street. Preliminary development plans call for the construction of a commercial/office structure.
- . A Youth Conservation Corps was initiated by the Committee for the purpose of beautifying and developing open space areas. Two projects were targeted for the Summer of 1982 - the beautification and clean up of the westerly side of Route 9 between Hartford Avenue and Green Street and clearing and grubbing operations at the Kennedy Tract.
- . The Committee closely monitored the administrative details in completing the construction of the Ferry/Green Street Parking Area, a new fifty (50) space lot. The Committee also monitored the extension of Industrial Park Road and saw to the administrative details concerning its completion.
- . The long awaited reconstruction of deKoven Drive began in the Spring of 1982 and the staff coordinated efforts among the Connecticut Department of Transportation, the Public Works Department, Park Department, residents and property owners situated in the area.

- . The reconstruction and restoration of the Danforth Pewter Shop advanced carefully and cautiously during the year. Arrangements to transport and store the building's structural components were completed as well as an inventory and determination of necessary repairs to the components. In coordination with the Middletown Preservation Trust, quotes were solicited from contractors for the foundation phase of the project to be completed during the Fall of 1982.
- . A Developer's Kit was prepared and advertising authorized to seek developers for the restoration of the North End Meetinghouse. The Committee further authorized the acquisition of an adjoining structure for the purpose of enhancing the physical qualities of the site. This project will serve as a catalyst for further development in the North End.
- . After careful review, the Committee recommended the establishment of an Economic Development Fund utilizing a variety of funding sources, including the re-establishment of a reserve based upon $\frac{1}{4}$ mill, for economic development purposes.
- . Recognizing the need to reconstruct downtown parking areas, the Committee met jointly with the Public Works Commission and recommended an appropriation of \$125,000 for the purpose of upgrading several municipal parking lots.
- . In response to a request from the Retail Trade Bureau concerning the lack of parking turnover in City lots, the Committee in conjunction with the Parking Authority, recommended a ninety (90) day temporary parking program to test new methods of encouraging the use of three particular parking lots for shopper use. Funds were made available for temporary staffing, ticket booths, fencing and necessary equipment.

- . The Committee administered the planting of 400 Burning Bushes along deKoven Drive in late 1981. This action is but one of the projects considered for improving the "front door" to Middletown's Central Business District.

Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Agency, J. Stephen Murphy, 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 General Assembly, as amended.

During the course of the fiscal year, the Agency approved thirteen permits, denied one, issued one cease and desist order and mandated corrective action concerning an illegal filling operation.

The Agency also adopted revised Inland Wetland Maps, prepared by Purcell Associates, in conjunction with a City-wide storm water and drainage structure analysis.

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

In pursuit of the City's goal to attract a restaurant facility within Harborpark, several qualified and innovative developers responded with proposals for the development of the former Middletown Yacht Club into a first-class dining facility. Following a review of the proposals and interviews, Frank Maratta Jr. was selected as developer for the project. The plan called for complete utilization of the building with an outdoor elevated terrace facing the Connecticut River.

Impeded from the start by extensive permit requirements, the Agency labored for many months in attempting to resolve the dilemma. This labor led to the delightful discovery that the Yacht Club was designed by two prominent architects at the beginning of their respective careers. As a result of this, plus other worthy historic factors, the Yacht Club has been placed on the Connecticut Register of Historic Places. The restaurant is slated for completion by May 1st of 1983.

In order to create a harmonious blend and direct attribution to Harborpark, the Agency recommended that Water Street be renamed Harbor Drive. This request was approved by the Common Council. The State Traffic Commission was petitioned to change the Route 9 William Street exit sign to reflect the harbor area. The matter has been referred to the Bureau of Highways. The Agency successfully negotiated a lease with the State of Connecticut for a parcel of land located on the westerly side of Harbor Drive to be utilized as a parking area.

Continuing activities such as Showcase, summer concerts, the Head of the Connecticut Regatta and the possibility of a three day performance by the American Woodwind Symphony Orchestra aboard a 195 foot long barge in July of 1983 in conjunction with the development of Harborfront Restaurant should create a sense of interest and pride in this most unique facility bordering the Connecticut River.

Vacant Buildings Study Committee, Vincent J. Loffredo, Chairman

Designated by the Common Council in early 1981 to prepare plans, specifications and alternatives for the purpose of upgrading the Stillman Municipal Annex, the Committee retained the services of an architect to conduct an

energy analysis and various feasibility studies of the building.

Following a review of the consultant's energy analysis and architect's report and estimate of \$1,235,000. to rehabilitate the Annex, the Committee requested the architect to revise his cost estimates to reflect only those items which are absolute minimum requirements for renovating and keeping the building open. Subsequently, a revised cost expenditure of \$304,000. was provided by the architect.

As an alternative to the proposed renovation, the Committee set out to investigate the availability of any buildings which may be vacated by the Board of Education or the possibility of renting space in the downtown area.

The Committee will deliberate on its findings and submit a recommendation to the Common Council in the late Fall.

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

During the early part of the fiscal year, the Economic Development Task Force completed its work on the report entitled "Economic Development Strategies". A work session was held with the Mayor and the members of the Common Council concerning the report. The report was accepted by the Common Council at its October, 1981 meeting.

The Common Council also recognized the Economic Development Task Force for its role in the development process. For that reason, the Task Force was given permanent status to act as a forum and recommending body to the Common Council for those actions which are necessary and essential to implement the City's Economic Development Program. To provide a source of funding for future economic development activities, an Economic Development Fund was

created by combining the assets of the former East Side and Municipal Development Funds.

One of the key economic strategies is the development of a second industrial park in the Westfield portion of the community. Industry For Middletown (InForM) retained consulting services for the Richards Brook Industrial Park feasibility study. When the preliminary report and findings were available, the Economic Development Task Force hosted a public information session in May, 1982. As a result of public comments, adjustments were made to the preliminary plans.

Toward the end of the fiscal year, the Economic Development Task Force invited representatives from the New England Association of Business, Industry and Rehabilitation and from the Connecticut Department of Economic Development in order that there might be an understanding of job training programs and resources. The Task Force also began to study the potential of a mixed use development strategy for the block bounded by College, Broad, Court and Main Streets. To that end, a scope of services was developed toward selecting a consultant to undertake a marketability and feasibility study.

Citizens Advisory Committee, Mary Schmidt, Chairman

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

- . At the request of the Mayor and Common Council, the Citizens Advisory Committee reviewed funding applications from City-based social service agencies for inclusion in the annual budget.
- . Acquired and rehabilitated additional properties under the Housing Cooperative Program so that 21 dwelling units are now enrolled in the program.
- . Recommended amendments to the Citizen Participation Plan which were adopted by the Common Council.
- . Executed contracts for the demolition and construction of the Ferry/Green Street parking lot, completed during the Summer of 1982.
- . Received HUD approval for an amendment to the 1978 Small Cities Grant to allow for the acquisition of additional property adjoining the North End Meetinghouse.
- . Conducted public hearings for the filing of a second amendment to the 1978 Small Cities Grant to allow for a parcel on the corner of Main and Green Streets to be offered for developer interest.
- . Sign contracts with an architectural firm for a study of the Main Street Firehouse.
- . In conjunction with the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust, filed all necessary documentation with the Connecticut Historical Commission for the creation of a historic district along the north end of Main Street.
- . Through staff, participated in the process of designing a Small Cities program to be implemented by the Connecticut Department of Housing beginning in 1982.
- . Conducted public hearings for purpose of filing with the Connecticut Department of Housing, a \$1.0 Million Multi-Year Comprehensive Application.