

M U N I C I P A L D E V E L O P M E N T O F F I C E

A N N U A L R E P O R T

1983 - 1984

S T A F F

William M. Kuehn, Jr.

Daniel D. Cienava

Barbara D. Santangelo

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - Vincent J. Loffredo, Chairman

Over the past fiscal year, this standing Committee of the Common Council dealt with many matters in its continuing role as a clearinghouse for Council action. The following highlights are indicative of the Committee's activities:

- The Committee reviewed the progress of the Youth Conservation Corps Program and lauded the performance of the Corps concerning their efforts in the construction of a regulation size softball field at Veteran's Memorial Park and the clearing of a 5,000 foot long vita and jogging course. Plans were formulated for the completion of the Vita Course for the following year.

In addition, weeding and landscaping activities were undertaken along deKoven Drive and the Hartford Avenue underpass area.

- The Committee recommended a \$5,000 appropriation for the purpose of conducting a historic survey and application for the creation of a historic district east of the Main Street Historic District, from Washington Street to Rapallo Avenue.

- The Municipal Development Committee reviewed and recommended the passage of an ordinance regarding a notice of intent to apply for a permit to demolish buildings which are over 50 years old.

- In conjunction with a grant obtained through the Emergency Jobs Bill, the Committee monitored the completion of various projects, including the

planting of Austrian Pines at Harborpark, the replacement of Andorra Junipers in the planter boxes on Main Street and the construction of a passive recreation area along the banks of the Connecticut River.

- The Committee recommended a \$150,000 loan to the Middletown Redevelopment Agency to complete committed activities with repayment of the loan to be made upon the sale of Disposition Parcel D-1B.
- The Committee authorized and recommended a \$1,000 expenditure for the purpose of conducting a preapplication study and submission to the National Register of Historic Places, of a district referred to as the Washington Park Area.
- In memory of Councilman Ernest Appellof, the Committee initiated renaming the Sawmill Brook Industrial Area to the Ernest C. Appellof Industrial Area.
- The Committee monitored the completion of Stillman School for residential reuse and recommended that proceeds from the sale of the building be assigned to the Economic Development Fund.
- Concern for parking in conjunction with North End development prompted the Committee to initiate a joint workshop with the Mayor and Common Council to discuss off-street parking requirements.
- The Committee recommended that Economic Development Task Force

functions be combined with the Municipal Development Committee and an increase in Committee membership from three to six.

- The Committee recommended a \$35,000 appropriation to complete the shell and exterior finish stage for the Danforth Pewter Shop and the establishment of a building committee to oversee construction activities.
- Having reviewed parking schemes for the Green/Rapallo, Washington/Ferry and Liberty/Grand blocks, staff was instructed to pursue funding sources for the development of the Green/Rapallo parking area; also, title search and appraisal activities were authorized.
- The Committee authorized and commissioned a feasibility study for the redevelopment of a portion of the East Main/Maple block. State funding was explored and developer interest was reviewed.
- A feasibility study concerning municipal building expansion underwent a lengthy review process and scrutiny by the Committee.
- The sale of various uneconomic remnants of City owned land was recommended by the Committee.
- The Committee, in association with the Chamber of Commerce, is preparing an ordinance regulating the activities, licensing and fees for peddlers wishing to do business in the City of Middletown.

- In association with the East Main Street/Sumner Creek Urban Systems Project, the Committee approved and recommended a \$115,000 appropriation from the Economic Development Fund for the reconstruction of Sumner Creek bridge and improvements to East Main Street.
- Advertising for the submission of development proposals for Disposition Parcel MDC-2, located at the northeast corner of Main and Green Streets, was initiated by the Committee.

INLAND WETLANDS AND WATER COURSES AGENCY, Jesse J. Salafia, Chairman

The Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Agency meets regularly on the first Wednesday of each month to administer Public Act 155 of the 1972 General Assembly, as amended, controlling activities and development along streams and in those areas of the City which are designated as wetlands by soil composition.

During the fiscal year, the Agency met on thirteen occasions - including four special meetings to deal with pressing matters. The Agency approved fourteen applications for permits, denied two variations of the same development and revoked one permit.

As quality land for development becomes increasingly scarce, pressures are placed upon the Inland Wetlands Agency for activity in marginal and envi-

ronmentally sensitive areas. The Agency in the past year, exercised increasing caution to the inappropriate use of wetlands and has acted with extreme care in reviewing applications. The Agency continues to enjoy a good working relationship with the Soil Conservation Service and various City departments in the review and critique of development proposals.

HARBOR IMPROVEMENT AGENCY, Edward J. Dzialo, Jr., Chairman

The Agency viewed, with great pride, the successful conversion of the Middletown Yacht Club into a first class restaurant facility. Subsequently, as a result of the tremendous reception of the facility by the general public, the Harbor Improvement Agency approved and recommended expansion of the kitchen and office facilities. In addition, the construction of a 220 foot long dock along the bulkhead was approved and completed in order to accommodate the mooring of pleasure craft. The cost for these improvements was assumed by the developer as well as the cost to demolish the old power plant to accommodate parking.

Harborpark continues to be the site of major events such as the Ninth Annual Head of the Connecticut Regatta held in October and various ethnic festivals.

The Harbor Improvement Agency has reaffirmed its position to assemble as much land as possible along the Connecticut River to ensure orderly development of this most valuable commercial, residential and recreational resource.

HOUSING TASK FORCE - Howard Byrd, Chairman

During the past fiscal year, the Housing Task Force completed its assignment by publishing a final report and submitting it to the Mayor, the Common Council and interested agencies. Before completing its work, however, the Task Force held a workshop session with the members of the Common Council. With the acceptance of this report, it has become a guide for providing new housing opportunities in the City of Middletown.

The Task Force was aided in its work by staff of the Midstate Regional Planning Agency. The final report was published with the assistance of Aetna Life and Casualty. Copies are available in the Municipal Development Office.

VACANT BUILDINGS STUDY COMMITTEE, Vincent J. Loffredo, Chairman

Having marketed Stillman School at a sales price of \$210,000, the Vacant Buildings Study Committee closely monitored this renovation and reconstruction project. The facility, containing twenty-eight residential units, was renovated at a cost of nearly \$800,000 and realized full occupancy by July of 1984. This adaptive reuse is a shining example of a process whereby surplus municipal buildings are converted into needed housing while healthy increases to City tax rolls are achieved as well.

In addition, Committee staff have been working with the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools in preparation of the vacating of Woodrow Wilson Middle School and Eckersley Hall. In anticipation of the projected

fall date, Woodrow Wilson Middle School has been approved for study by the State Historical Office for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. A similar approach will be attempted for Eckersley Hall and should provide the financial incentives to attract investors and developers to participate in the project.

Hall House is being restudied for a possible educational reuse possibly as a central maintenance facility.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - Mary Schmidt, Chairman

The Citizens Advisory Committee advises the Mayor and Common Council in matters pertaining to the Community Development Block Grant Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Highlights of the past year are as follows:

- After forming a Housing Site Development Agency for the purpose of acquiring additional State funding for the purchase of 634 Main Street, the property was sold to the private sector. The Committee then held a public hearing in order to reprogram nearly \$290,000 away from the 634 Main Street project.
- As a result of the reprogramming process, funds were redirected to the Salvation Army, St. Vincent dePaul Place, Community Health Center and the North End Mixed Use Program.

- The City made application for and received, the second half of a two year \$1,000,000 grant under the Small Cities Program as administered by the Connecticut Department of Housing. Small Cities funds are primarily directed to housing rehabilitation activities.

- The City was declared by HUD to be eligible for CDBG funds as an Entitlement Community beginning in 1984. To that end, an application was submitted for \$467,000 for a variety of rehabilitation programs and for monies to the Housing Authority, Community Health Center, Community Action for Greater Middletown and sidewalks.

- The first fruits of the creation of a Main Street Historic District became evident during the year with the completion of the renovation and restoration of the Caulkin's Auto building and the construction activity at the North End Meetinghouse and Kabatznick buildings. During the year, other applications for the Mixed Use Program combined with the Tax Act incentives were also approved.