

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

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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 and a development arm of the City. The following are highlights of the Committee's activities.

- . Reviewing the activities of the Youth Conservation Corps program, the Committee was advised that a 4,000 foot jogging trail had been excavated at Veterans Memorial Park as part of the proposed exercise course. Additionally, 375 cubic yards of 3/4 inch processed gravel was spread over the trail to a depth of 4 inches. The course received its first formal competition in October, 1984 when the Southwest Conference held a cross country track meet on the site. Exercise equipment will be purchased and installed to complete the course during the summer of 1985.
- . Monitored the progress of the Danforth Pewter Shop Restoration Project and physically assisted in raising the shell. With the completion of phase two, the Committee endorsed private fund raising activities.
- . In response to a request by the Chamber of Commerce, the Committee drafted an ordinance to regulate the activities of peddlers, vendors and solicitors in Middletown.
- . Recommended an ordinance banning the repair of motor vehicles in public parking areas.
- . Recommended an ordinance setting certain buildings in the Main Street Historic District as outside fire limits in terms of the State Building Code.

- . Recommended an \$80,000 expenditure for preliminary engineering costs for the Beverly Heights Bridge.
- . Recommended an amendment to an ordinance providing payment of prevailing wages by developers and contractors acquiring City property for development purposes. A Zoning Text Amendment was also recommended by the Committee regarding parking requirements for urban core living units.
- . With the phase out of the Middletown Redevelopment Agency, the Municipal Development Committee and staff assumed relocation, disposition and project close-out activities not completed by the Agency. In this role, the Committee successfully marketed Disposition Parcel D-1-B, along deKoven Drive and designated Carabetta Enterprises, Inc. as developer of the River's Bend Apartments which will accommodate 98 apartment units with accompanying parking. In addition, Carabetta Enterprises, Inc. was designated developer of the Armory in conjunction with Gerard Weitzman. In other Redevelopment matters, a Certificate of Completion was issued for Stage 2 of the Middlesex Plaza project and the Committee reviewed and approved plans for the conversion of the former Middlesex Theatre to the Opera House Restaurant. Plans for the construction of a three story commercial/office structure, in place of the originally proposed five story office building, were reviewed and approved.

- . Acting as the development arm of the City, the Committee successfully marketed Disposition Parcel MDC-2, on the corner of Green and Main Streets, to accommodate a commercial unit on the ground floor and SRO units on the second and third floors. The Committee also reviewed and approved plans for the construction of 78 residential units at Forge Square on South Main Street, and reviewed plans by Oxford Development Corporation to construct 336 units at Westlake.
- . Plans for the Green/Rapallo parking area were formulated and a program initiated to implement this new off-street parking facility. The Committee also reviewed and acted on requests to purchase City land and approved the sale of one acre of land to the Bourdon Forge Company for their expansion.
- . The East Main/Maple Place project was conceived and John Cotter was designated as the developer to construct 50 units on site.
- . Worked closely with Fenner-America and the Flatley Company concerning their proposed development projects.
- . The Committee spent countless hours reviewing and familiarizing themselves with the requirements and benefits of tax exempt multi-family housing revenue bonds. This bonding mechanism was carefully evaluated to assist

the City's housing needs. As a result, a policy was established requiring a set aside of 10% of the units for persons earning 80% of the median income and a set aside of 10% of the units of persons at lower income levels.

HARBOR IMPROVEMENT AGENCY - Edward J. Dzialo, Chairman

With the successful conversion of Harbor Park Restaurant and subsequent increase in the size of the kitchen, the Agency directed its activities toward the betterment of the riverfront area. Discussion centered around the beautification of Route 9 between Hartford Avenue and the Harbor Area exits, erosion of riverbanks and the preparation of a Riverfront Development Plan. Following several meetings and a lengthy discussion of the matter, an application was submitted to the Connecticut River Trust in the amount of \$213,500 with \$30,000 being requested toward the Riverfront Development Plan, \$48,500 toward the Route 9 Beautification Plan and \$135,000 for acquisition of land along the riverfront. Subsequent approval was received from the Connecticut River Trust for the Route 9 Beautification Program and the Riverfront Development Plan. Projects were advertised and bids were solicited.

With the completion of the Riverfront Development Plan and its subsequent recommendations, the Harbor Improvement Agency will endeavor to acquire additional land along the riverfront in conformance with the objectives and

goals of the Connecticut River Trust. In addition, the Agency has petitioned the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for information to correct erosion along the banks of the Connecticut River.

VACANT BUILDINGS STUDY COMMITTEE - Vincent J. Loffredo, Chairman

Woodrow Wilson Middle School, having been vacated by the Board of Education, was advertised for developer interest. Following the submission of proposals by four developers, the Committee recommended that Christopher M. Carr Associates be designated as developer of Woodrow Wilson Middle School. The development program calls for the construction of 61 units of housing at an estimated cost of \$2.7 Million Dollars. The property will be sold to the developer at a cost of \$490,000. This adaptive reuse is a further example of a process whereby surplus municipal buildings are converted into needed housing while healthy increases to the City tax roll are achieved as well.

In addition, Committee staff has been working with the Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools in preparation of the vacating of Eckersley Hall. and its subsequent reuse.

As of June, 1985, the old Middletown High School, Central Middle School and Stillman School have been successfully converted to 60 elderly apartments, 28 condominium units and 28 rental units, respectively.

INLAND WETLANDS AND WATER COURSES AGENCY - Jesse 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 a soil composition.

During the fiscal year, the Agency met on eleven occasions. The Agency's record shows that 20 applications were approved, while two were denied. A testimony to the Agency's thoroughness in reviewing applications is borne out by the number of public hearing items - 20 - which were scheduled during the year, many of which were carried over to subsequent meetings for further study.

Two hearings involved the illegal placement of fill in wetland systems, an aspect of the wetlands administration process which is becoming increasingly burdensome. The Inland Wetlands Agency has enjoyed the use of Public Works staff to field monitor wetland activity; however, the Common Council recognizing the need for greater surveillance, so created a new position which will deal with wetlands and zoning enforcement.

The Inland Wetlands Agency adopted an amendment to its regulations requiring the posting of signs on any property involved in a public hearing before the Agency. Its purpose is to give greater notification to residents of public

hearing matters. The actions of the Agency and the Common Council taken during the past year, signal the increasing care that the City intends to exercise in monitoring the use of environmentally sensitive areas such as streams and wetlands.

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 as funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Citizens Advisory Committee also monitors and evaluates the performance of the wide variety of Community Development Block Grant Programs and, if necessary, recommends changes to make the use of these Federal funds more effective. Highlights of actions from the past year are as follows:

- . Approved revisions to the Equity in Housing budget to allow the close-out of the program through the acquisition of a four family structure in the North End.
- . As a result of media coverage, saw a renewed interest in the Residential Rehabilitation Program which provided many new applicants in the targeted Neighborhood Strategy Areas in need of housing assistance.

- . Recommended to the Common Council that the continued prudent use of interest on the lump sum draw be appropriated to the Mixed Use Program. Likewise, repayments to the Revolving Fund under both the Mixed Use and Rehabilitation Program have been reappropriated for Residential Rehabilitation Program use.
- . Reaffirmed the City's commitment to the faithful historic preservation of buildings to be rehabilitated by renewing and extending its contract with the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust for advisory services.
- . Recommended an application be submitted for 1985 Entitlement Funds with monies to be used for sheltering the Homeless, Mixed Use Program, Community Health Center, shelter for battered women, Housing Authority and Salvation Army.

William M. Kuehn, Jr.
Municipal Development Coordinator

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