

**MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**1985 - 1986**

**STAFF**

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With the sudden passing of "Danny" Cienava on June 18, 1986, it is fitting that the Municipal Development Office and each Committee and Agency served by this office, recognize and remember Danny's special contributions toward making Middletown a better City in which to live.

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 role as a clearinghouse for Council action and a development arm of the City. The following are highlights of the Committee's activities:

- . Continued to meet with numerous developers interested in the benefits of tax exempt multi-family housing revenue bonds issued through the City of Middletown. As a result of this interest, the Committee further refined mechanisms to assure that low and moderate income family housing would be provided by participating developers.
- . Conducted public hearings on the proposed Peddler's Ordinance and recommended a document to the Common Council, subsequently approved.
- . As the guiding force behind the Summer Youth Conservation Corps program, oversaw the installation of exercise stations and the completion of the fitness trail at Vet's Park, dedicated to the memory of Bernard A. Giza.
- . Through the Common Council, provided \$300,000 for the acquisition and development of the Green/Rapallo Parking Area; approved negotiated acquisitions; and, through the City Attorney's office began the purchase of properties. The Committee was also assisted by the Public Works Department through the preparation of engineering plans for the parking lot and demolition specifications.
- . Met and negotiated with Klein & Jay, the developers of the Shapiro's building, concerning the use of tax exempt housing bonds and the use of City owned off-street parking areas in order to meet parking requirements.

- . Recommended to the Common Council, the acquisition of recreational equipment for the Green Street Playground, scheduled for installation in the Summer of 1986.
- . Negotiated with representatives of the Fenner-America Company and the potential purchaser of the property concerning the creation of a public land trust for Rubber Mill Pond, a portion of Sumner Creek and several dam structures.
- . Secured Common Council approval of resolutions establishing the steps by which a new State Armory would be constructed in Middletown through land transfers, thus permitting the release of the existing Armory on Main Street for private development.
- . Provided funding and oversaw the completion of all exterior work at the Danforth Pewter Shop.
- . Negotiated the terms by which land was conveyed to the developers of the former Woodrow Wilson Middle School on Hunting Hill Avenue.
- . Secured Common Council approval of funds to provide additional sheltered housing at the Salvation Army building on Main Street.
- . Witnessed the construction of a new building on Parcel MDC-1 which previously had been conveyed to Master Supply.
- . Authorized staff to prepare an application to the Connecticut Department of Housing for \$237,600 for Innovative Housing Funds for purposes of rehabilitating Shepherd Home at the Connecticut Valley Hospital.

- . Authorized staff to file an application to the Connecticut Department of Housing in the amount of \$100,000 under the Rental Rehabilitation Program.
- . Negotiated with Farmers' & Mechanics Bank, the conveyance of an easement between F & M and CBT properties which will be converted to a landscaped pedestrian walkway.
- . Approved developer's kits for the College/Court Block and the Golf Course and authorized their advertisement in various media.

MIDDLETOWN REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY - Henry Novicki, Chairman

The reconstituted Redevelopment Agency, organized pursuant to Chapter 126 of the Connecticut General Statutes, held its organizational meeting in January, 1986. The Agency enjoys broad redevelopment powers and bonding authority which have been instrumental in renewing major portions of downtown Middletown over the past twenty years. The following are highlights of recent activities:

- . Recommended the conveyance of Disposition Parcel D-1-B to River's Bend Limited Partnership for a twelve story apartment structure with amenities.
- . Approved the final plans of Connecticut Valley Development Associates for Phase III of the Plaza Middlesex project. Formal groundbreaking for the three story commercial building with clock tower and carillon was in October, 1985 while actual construction began in March, 1986.

- . Met with the owners of undeveloped property within the Center Street Urban Renewal Project to encourage planning for the development of the parcel in keeping with City objectives.
- . Took steps to become involved in the East Main Street/Maple Place housing project using the powers of the Redevelopment Agency, if and when necessary.
- . Recommended preliminary designation of G. Weitzman as developer of the Armory structure as it becomes available to the City from the State of Connecticut.
- . Initiated discussion with the YMCA to encourage the development of Parcel E-2 in the Metro-South urban renewal project area.
- . With the Municipal Development Committee, approved a developer's kit for the College/Court block in anticipation of project execution through the use of Redevelopment Agency powers.

At the close of the fiscal year, Phase III of the Plaza Middlesex project is well along with a target completion date of January 1, 1987. Additionally, the Agency is optimistic concerning the renewal of the College/Court block and other underutilized parcels in the downtown still under the Agency's jurisdiction.

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

The Agency is responsible for initiating and implementing, in cooperation with other City departments, plans, specifications and estimates for the full development and beautification of the Connecticut River waterfront.

Using funds provided by the Connecticut River Trust, the Agency reviewed and approved bid specifications for a major Route 9 Beautification Program between William Street and the Arrigoni Bridge. This work resulted in the provision of plantings, the demolition of the former Green Street pumping station and the creation of many new river vistas through the clearing and thinning of trees along the west bank of the Connecticut River. The Agency was greatly aided through the services of Northeast Utilities landscape architects.

A second major thrust of the past fiscal year was the preparation by CE Maguire of a new Riverfront Development Plan. The plan delivered in April, 1986 considered, in detail: the condition and future location and alignment of River Road; the location of railroad stations - should the Connecticut Valley Railroad line be extended northerly; environmental factors in developing the riverfront; and, proposed land uses for undeveloped and underdeveloped properties between the railroad bridge and the Feldspar property. The report provides the framework for guiding riverfront development through to the end of this century.

INLAND WETLANDS AND WATER COURSES AGENCY - Steven Leinwand, 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 twelve occasions. A review of Agency activities shows that twenty-seven applications were approved for a permit, one was denied while three others were withdrawn before a decision was rendered. Additionally, the Agency issued two cease and desist orders.

As quality land for development becomes increasingly scarce, pressures are placed upon the Agency to permit activity in marginal and environmentally sensitive areas. Such pressures also increase the level of illegal activity in wetlands. Thus, the hiring of a Wetlands Enforcement Officer in May, 1986 gave the Agency a new dimension in surveilling and controlling activity in and around designated wetlands. The Wetlands Officer is primarily a field position and will give the Agency the day-to-day reconnaissance that is needed in a community of intense development pressures. The Agency, in outworking its responsibilities, continues to enjoy a positive working relationship with various City departments and especially with the Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

VACANT BUILDINGS STUDY COMMITTEE - Emanuel A. Pattavina, Chairman

This Committee is charged with recommending to the governing body appropriate reuses for vacated City buildings. The Committee has successfully marketed surplus educational structures which have come "off line" due to their inappropriateness in meeting the high standards established for modern educational facilities. As of June, 1986, three former schools have been successfully converted for multi-family residential use, while a fourth, the former Woodrow Wilson Middle School, is totally involved in construction activities leading to an early 1987 opening.

During the past fiscal year, the Committee turned its attention to the former Eckersley Hall School on Durant Street.

The Committee heard considerable testimony from neighbors of the area and in consideration of the eventual reopening of Spencer School on Westfield Street for educational purposes sought advice on converting Eckersley Hall to municipal offices. To that end, a consultant was retained and a report received explaining the financial ramifications of such a move. At the close of the fiscal year, the Committee was considering interest by St. Sebastian's Parish to re-open Eckersley Hall as a parochial school. Final decisions concerning the Eckersley Hall facility are expected during the next fiscal year.

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE - Mary Schmidt, Chairman

The Citizens Advisory Committee advises the Mayor and 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 activities. Highlights during the past year resulting from funding various programs are as follows:

- . Completed all 1982 Small Cities projects including allocations to the Residential Rehabilitation Program, Mixed Use Program, Housing Cooperative Program and work at the Senior Center.
- . Completed all but one activity of the 1983 Small Cities Program.

- . Expended \$300,000 of the 1984 Entitlement Grant, principally for the Mixed Use and Residential Rehabilitation Programs, improvements at Sbona Towers and reconstruction of sidewalks along Pearl Street.
- . Initiated spending activities for the 1985 Entitlement Program including several Housing Authority projects, physical improvements to the Community Health Center, funds for the rehabilitation of Shepherd Home on the grounds of the Connecticut Valley Hospital and the provision of a second stage battered womens' shelter.
- . Added \$104,000 from loan pay-backs to the Residential Rehabilitation Revolving Fund.
- . Added \$101,000 to the fund for Mixed Use Rehabilitation activities with interest earned on lump sum draw investments.

DOWNTOWN PARKING STUDY COMMITTEE - Edward Pratesi, Chairman

Formally known as the "Central Business District Parking Supply and Demand Study Committee", this body with representatives from the Common Council, Parking Authority and business community are charged with studying the availability of off-street parking in the downtown and with offering recommendations to the Mayor and Common Council to provide additional parking spaces to meet downtown growth requirements.

The Committee focused its attention on three areas: the College to Court Block; the public parking facility at Broad and Washington Streets; and, the Parking Arcade structure behind Sears. The Committee first looked at the College/Court Block and quantified the parking need in that block for existing

and anticipated development at 1,171 spaces. Mindful of developer interest, the Committee recommended to the City that a developer's kit be prepared for the block and developer interest actively sought.

In order to give adequate consideration and study to the Broad/Washington Street facility and the Parking Arcade, the Committee requested and received architectural consulting assistance. By year's end, the Committee studied a variety of options for placing a second level at the Broad/Washington Street lot and favors a solution which provides additional parking and commercial space along the Washington Street side. Following the conclusion of continued study of this and the Parking Arcade, a final report will be issued by the Committee in the Fall of 1986.



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Municipal Development Director

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