

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

ANNUAL REPORT

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STAFF (as of 6/30/87):

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MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE, William M. Kuehn, Jr., Director

The Municipal Development Office serves as staff to six permanent committees and agencies. Additionally, the office is asked to staff, from time to time, short term committee functions which tend to be project oriented. Examples of the latter are: Downtown Parking Committee; Danforth Pewter Shop Committee; and, Shepherd Home Committee. The following highlights the activities of the six major committee assignments.

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - Vincent J. Loffredo, Chairman

Each year, this standing committee of the Common Council deals with many matters in its role as a clearinghouse for Councilmanic action and as a development arm of the City. Last year, the Committee accomplished the following:

- . After reviewing a request from Klein & Jay, developers of the former Shapiro's building, recommended to the Common Council conveyance of 6,000± square feet of City property.
- . Oversaw activities of the Summer Youth Conservation Corps Program. In the Summer of 1986, the major accomplishments were: painted tunnel under Route 9; assisted in erection of playground equipment on Green Street; and, completely repaired and stained boardwalk, gazebos and utility structure at Harborpark. The boardwalk alone required 150 gallons of paint.
- . Authorized the filing of an Enterprize Zone application with the Connecticut Department of Economic Development.

- . In staff matters, requested the creation of an Assistant Director and a second secretarial position, both in the process of being filled at the end of the fiscal year.
- . Recommended conveyance of City property on Baldwin Street and conveyance of an easement on Crystal Lake Road to abutting property owners.
- . Recommended acquisition of the Scionti property on Butternut Street to serve the growing needs of the Park & Recreation and Public Works Departments.
- . Advertised for developer interest in the creation of a golf course on Mile Lane. After receipt of a proposal from Kogut Enterprises, Inc. of Meriden, the Committee recommended preliminary developer designation.
- . Initiated the abandonment of a portion of Hendley Street and together with an adjoining City property on Butternut Street, advertised for developer interest in a one acre parcel.
- . In light of changing financial resources for low income housing developments, reconsidered economic alternatives for redeveloping the East Main Street/Maple Place Project area.
- . Applied for and received a commitment of \$250,000 from the Connecticut Department of Housing for the Shepherd Home Project.
- . Through the City Attorney's Office, continued land acquisition for the Green/Rapallo Parking Lot. Demolished five structures within the project area.

- . Recommended the refinancing of the Forge Square Project from tax exempt housing bonds to use of the Moderate Rental Program sponsored by the Connecticut Department of Housing.
- . Initiated through an open session of State Legislators and City Department Heads, the creation of the City's legislative agenda for consideration by the 1987 Connecticut General Assembly.
- . Recommended to the Common Council, the use of \$10,500 from the Economic Development Fund for use by the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust to determine the feasibility of moving the Polish Falcons building on Court Street.
- . Supported the demolition of the Long Hill School for additional elderly units at Marino manor.
- . Monitored the activities of the Danforth Pewter Shop restoration, including the restructuring of the committee to complete the project.
- . Upon referral from the Redevelopment Agency, met with owners of undeveloped property within the Center Street Urban Renewal Project to negotiate for use of the Middletown Parking Arcade.

MIDDLETOWN REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY - Henry S. Novicki, Chairman

During the past fiscal year, the Agency's activities involved three separate Urban Renewal Projects: the Center Street project; the Metro South project; and, the Middlesex Mutual Assurance Company Development Project. To administer these projects, the Agency enjoys broad redevelopment powers and bonding authority through the Connecticut General Statutes. The Agency continues to serve a key function in renewing major portions of the Central

Business District of Middletown. The following are highlights of the year's activities:

- . Concerning the Center Street Project, the Agency heard a proposal from the owners of undeveloped property at the corner of Court Street and deKoven Drive for a ten story commercial building with 200 parking spaces. Approved amendments to the Center Street Project Plan.
- . Issued Certificates of Completion for the following: Huntington's (Atticus) Book Store; Color Mart; and, Burger King.
- . With two unsettled relocation claims, one was resolved while the other was being negotiated by the City Attorney's Office.
- . Approved a revised layout for parking at Plaza Middlesex.
- . Approved an agreement between the YMCA, Middlesex Memorial Hospital and the City for the use of Parcel E-2 south of Greenfield Avenue.
- . Recommended and received from the Economic Development Fund, \$120,000 to construct footings and foundations for a parking deck on the River's Edge Project area.
- . On July 14, 1986, accepted a proposal from Middlesex Mutual Assurance Company for a \$48.0 Million Dollar development involving two office towers and a 1,100+ car parking garage in the College/Court Street area. As a part of the package, the City was awarded \$1,625,000 from the Connecticut Department of Economic Development.
- . Following a series of public hearings in January, 1987, the Middlesex Mutual Assurance Company Development Project was launched. To assist the

Agency, various consultants were hired to help in matters of relocation, legal work and engineering. Further, subcommittees were formed by the Redevelopment Agency to review and recommend to the larger body actions to implement the project. The fiscal year closed with initial acquisitions, relocation and construction activities ready to commence during the Summer of 1987.

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

As stated by Ordinance, the responsibility of this Agency is "to initiate and implement, in cooperation with appropriate City agencies, plans, specifications and estimates for the full development and beautification of the waterfront area....." Highlights of the Agency's activities follow:

- . On January 9, 1987, toured portions of the Connecticut River bank with personnel from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Based upon that visit, the City was notified that certain eroded areas along River Road and the water well field are eligible for Federal participation.
- . To implement portions of the Riverfront Development Plan, coordination with State agencies was deemed essential. To that end, copies were forwarded to the State and meetings held with staff from the Office of Policy and Management.
- . With the Riverfront Development Plan recommending a mix of development on a 30 acre parcel at the Connecticut Valley Hospital, legislation was introduced and testimony offered on several occasions to seek the release of that property. In 1988, the Connecticut General Assembly will again consider the matter.

- . Authorized the preparation of a property appraisal for land to facilitate the realignment of a bridge and portions of River Road.
- . Continued to oversee the landscaping contract work for the Route 9 area.
- . With Park & Recreation staff, recommended improvements to the North Cove at Harborpark.
- . Developed a priority land acquisition list to help fulfill certain objectives of the new Riverfront Development Plan with monies earmarked from the Connecticut River Trust.

INLAND WETLAND AND WATER COURSES AGENCY - Steven Leinwand, Chairman

The Inland Wetland and Water Courses Agency is responsible for the administration of Public Act 155 of the 1972 General Assembly, as amended. That legislation requires the controlling of activities in regulated soils (wetlands) and along streams and rivers (water courses). The Agency meets regularly on the first Wednesday of each month.

During the last fiscal year the Agency met on thirteen occasions. While the level of approvals and denials parallels the previous year, the Agency was faced with increasingly difficult applications reflecting the lack of good, developable land in the City. The record shows that twenty-eight applications were approved while three were denied. In coming to those decisions, seventeen matters went to public hearing. Additionally, several cease and desist orders were issued and several other applications withdrawn before either a public hearing was held or a decision rendered.

The Agency saw fit to call upon the services of the Eastern Connecticut Environmental Review Team to assist in evaluating the impact of subdividing the 84 acre Hubbard Estate into 76 house lots. The Agency also began to come to grips with the problem of placing retention/detention ponds within wetland systems.

At a higher level, the General Assembly became increasingly involved in its concern over the quickly diminishing wetlands throughout the State. To that end, several major pieces of legislation were passed with an effective date of July 1, 1987 to increase local agencies' authority and to mandate additional cooperation with local planning and zoning commissions.

The availability of a Wetlands Enforcement Officer throughout the year proved invaluable in assisting the Agency and its staff in monitoring development activity in and around regulated wetlands and water courses. As in the past, the Agency and staff enjoyed a working relationship with various City departments and with the Soil Conservation Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

VACANT BUILDINGS STUDY COMMITTEE - Emanuel A. Pattavina, Chairman

This nine member committee is responsible for making recommendations to the Mayor and Common Council for reuse vacated City buildings. In four cases, former schools have been successfully marketed and converted to residential use. Last year, the former Woodrow Wilson Middle School was reopened as an apartment development.

During the 1986-87 fiscal year the committee considered the former Eckersley Hall School on Durant Street, vacated by the Board of Education. Based upon interest expressed by St. Sebastians Parish and testimony from neighbors in

the Durant Street area, the committee recommended that the City exchange with St. Sebastian's Parish the former Eckersley Hall School for the school on Green Street. At the close of the fiscal year that transaction had taken place and the parish was working toward the rehabilitation of the Eckersley Hall facility in order to reopen at that location in September, 1987.

At the same time, staff prepared a packet of information on the Green Street School so that the committee could seek developer interest, if desired. Final decisions concerning the Green Street facility are expected during the 1987-88 fiscal year.

#### **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. The City has been receiving CDGB funds under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended and is an entitlement community, meaning that as long as Congress continues to fund the program, Middletown will be a recipient of these monies principally to serve the low and moderate income citizens of the community. Highlights during the past year resulting from funding various programs are as follows:

- . Initiated spending activities for the 1986 Entitlement Program including residential rehabilitation and mixed use rehabilitation programs; staff services for St. Vincent dePaul and the Community Health Center; and, construction funds for the Nehemiah Housing Corporation.
- . Reprogrammed over \$57,000.00 from the 1984 and 1985 Entitlement Programs to the Middletown Housing Authority for construction of a community room at Long River Village.

- . Added \$150,000.00 from loan paybacks to the Residential Rehabilitation Program.
- . Added \$120,000.00 from loan paybacks to the Mixed Use Rehabilitation Program.