

ANNUAL REPORT 90-91
MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
WILLIAM M. KUEHN, JR., DIRECTOR

Municipal Development Office

Staff as of 07/01/90

William M. Kuehn, Jr.
Linda A. Ozga
Cynthia G. Wilcox
Barbara D. Santangelo
Lisa M. Kielb

The Municipal Development Office represents a broad scope of physical, socio-economic, and environmental planning endeavors aimed toward the enhancement of the quality of life of the City of Middletown and its citizens. It balances a complex agenda of development, housing, environmental and administrative issues through the twelve or more agencies and committees, which it staffs.

The following are highlights of activities of some of the major committee assignments:

1. Urban Forestry Commission
2. Municipal Development Committee
3. Middletown Housing Partnership
4. Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency
5. REINVEST
6. Redevelopment Agency
7. Citizen's Advisory Committee
8. Conservation Commission
9. Harbor Improvement Agency

In addition to the foregoing staff assignments, the Municipal Development Office has also worked with the Long River Village Task Force and the Shepherd Home Liaison Committee.

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URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION - J. Stanley Watson, Jr., Chairman

Lewis B. Daniels
Mary Ann Dickinson*
Juana M. Flagg
Hortense Kabel
Anthony S. Marino
Joseph C. Serra
Bruce W. Spaman

*resigned

1990 was "The Year of the Forest", and Middletown is "The Forest City".....a year and a place which saw the successful conclusion of the State's Urban and Community Forest Pilot Project, and the formal authorization of the Urban Forestry Commission and its programs into the workings of municipal government. Bruce Spaman, arborist, presented the Board/Commission with the completion of the tree inventory in the summer, and an outstanding five-year Management Plan for Middletown's Urban Forest in the fall. In addition to delivery of the Inventory and Management Plan, in fiscal year 1990-1991, the Urban Forestry Commission:

- . Sponsored an Arborists' pruning demonstration in August, on twelve street trees in front of Metro Square, for which five tree companies donated their professional skills to show how Main Street trees could be pruned to avoid sign conflicts.
- . Conducted a public opinion telephone survey in September using RSVP volunteers to ascertain the attitude of the general public toward trees.
- . Conducted workshops with the Common Council and Department heads on the implementation of the Management Plan.
- . Designed, promoted and saw the passage of a comprehensive tree ordinance in November which created a permanent commission, a position of City Forester, and guidelines for a good Urban Forestry program.

URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION - ANNUAL REPORT 1990-1991 - CONTINUED

- . Created and distributed public relations materials from "Forest City" T-shirts to informational brochures.
- . Had Middletown awarded the National status of "Tree City USA".
- . Applied for, and received, funding for a significant Arbor Day planting from Waldbaum's Food Mart and DEP.
- . Conducted Arbor Day ceremonies at the Police Station and Traverse Square which included the "adopting" of seventeen new shade trees by pairs of resident children and police officers for their ongoing care, the acceptance of "Tree City" awards, and the contribution of tree funding by Waldbaum's, the Housing Authority and the Public Works Department.
- . Lobbied for full funding of the first year's tree work and planting, as designated in the Management Plan.

In the absence of a City Forester, the Commission continued to update the inventory; looked for ways to coordinate the Management plan with the ongoing tree programs of other City departments; and continued to respond to City requests for tree related information and advice, ranging from new tree plantings to zoning issues.

MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - Nancy Conaway-Raczka, Chairperson
Stephen Gionfriddo
Philip Halibozek

The Municipal Development Committee is comprised of three members of the Common Council who serve as a development arm of the City. During the past fiscal year the following projects were implemented and/or completed:

In July, forty-three flower planters were placed along Main Street sidewalks by the Youth Conservation Corps. In November, the Middletown Garden Club donated time and expertise by decorating the planters for the holiday season.

In August, the Committee recommended that a vacant City-owned parcel at the corner of Main and Green Street be leased to the Community Health Center for the development of an urban park. In May, the park was completed.

In September, a grant application for North End Neighborhood Renewal Projects was submitted to the Connecticut Department of Housing for funding under the Housing and Community Development Program. The application was viewed favorably and in May the City signed an agreement with the State for a \$492,055 grant to undertake the following:

- . Street, Sidewalk and Curb Improvements on Green Street
- . Expansion and Improvements to Green/deKoven Street Playground
- . Residential Rehabilitation Loans at 4% Interest for 60% of the Project Cost for North End Moderate Income property owners.
- . Solid Waste Consolidation Facilities and Landscaping

In October, a model of the downtown was unveiled in the lobby of the Municipal Building. The 6'x12' model at a scale of 1" = 50, was created by Ben Ledbetter, a local architect. It will remain in the lobby to be used for planning and educational purposes--and, of course, for passive examination by visitors.

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In January, the Committee approved retaining its first student intern, who worked on several development projects in the Office in conjunction with her senior year faculty advisor at Southern Connecticut State University.

In February, the Green/Rapallo Street Parking Lot was completed resulting in thirty-four new parking spaces in a landscaped setting.

MIDDLETOWN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

Mayor Paul Gionfriddo, Chairman
Marvin Farbman, Vice Chairman
Linda Ozga, Secretary
Mary Barnes
James Dunn
Anthony Gaunichaux
P. Thomas Gionfriddo
Philip Halibozek
Richard Kreh
Gloria McMullen
George Reif
John Robinson
Joseph Rumberger
William von Mahland
Stephen Gionfriddo*
Leila Gonzalez-Sullivan*

MIDDLETOWN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP TRUST, INC.

William von Mahland, President
John Robinson, Vice President
Marvin Farbman, Secretary
Joann Lombardo, Treasurer
Mayor Paul Gionfriddo
Leila Gonzalez-Sullivan
John Guerin
Richard Kreh
M. Christopher Peterson

*resigned

The Middletown Housing Partnership is the entity in City government which supports and promotes the development of affordable housing in Middletown for its citizens of moderate incomes and less. Created as part of the statewide Housing Partnership Program, its governing body consists of the Mayor, staff and commission representatives from such public boards as Planning & Zoning, Inland Wetlands, Municipal Development, Regional Planning and Housing Authority; and from non-profit housing developers, realtors, bankers, educators and housing advocates in the private sector. In 1990-91, the Partnership:

- . Received the Balanced Inventory Waiver under the Connecticut Housing Partnership Program which entitles the City to all the priority considerations of Development Designation.
- . Created a non-profit Community Land Trust - The Middletown Housing Partnership Trust, Inc. - to pursue the acquisition of the sixteen (16) units of Military Housing; to act as a recipient/subrecipient of State

and Federal funds for affordable housing projects where the City is ineligible; and, to hold and manage tracts of land upon which affordable housing is, or can be, located.

- . Allocated \$110,000 of the Affordable Housing Fund to the Middletown Housing Partnership Trust for deferred second mortgages, down payment assistance and/or closing costs for the buyers of Military Housing.
- . Considered a request for the provision of congregate elderly housing in Middletown.
- . Upon receiving notice of State Surplus Land on Long Lane from the Connecticut Department of Housing, developed and published an RFP for developer interest from non-profit housing corporations; received proposals from and interviewed five prospective developers; and worked closely with the State in the process of designating a preferred developer. As a result of this process, a single family subdivision is proposed to be built on the State Surplus land which will be held in a Community Land Trust.

Simultaneously, the Middletown Housing Partnership Trust acting independently, but in conformance with the wishes of the Partnership, doggedly pursued the purchase of Military Housing from the Army. They applied for and received \$483,597 toward its purchase from the Department of Housing LB/LT Program; and received a mortgage set-aside from CHFA for prospective buyers which will cover the balance of the purchase costs not funded by the Land Trust Grant or the Community Development Block Grant funds. They further developed criteria for buyer selection, compiled pools of applicants, produced a ground lease acceptable to all granters and loaners, advocated for the Army families, and continued to participate in numerous negotiating sessions with the Army, The Department of Housing, and the other Connecticut towns and non-profits with Military Housing.

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INLAND WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES AGENCY - William H. von Mahland, Chairman

Jonathan R. Beatty
Janet Brooks
Fletcher H. Brown, Jr.
Joseph M. Carta
Robert Chamberlain
Steven M. Gomes
Gardner Hudson
Harold Lawson
Peter Patton
Douglas Raineault
Albert J. Santostefano
Clifton Seifert
Sheila Stoane
Paul Szewczyk

The Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency is charged with administering Public Act 155 of the 1972 General Assembly, as amended.

That legislation requires regulating activities in wetland soils and along streams and rivers (including intermittent streams) and adjoining areas where activities may adversely impact a regulated area.

During the 1990-1991 fiscal year, the Agency met on fourteen (14) occasions. Those meetings resulted in the Agency conducting public hearings on 19 applications and issuing the following decisions: permit applications approved - 28; permit applications denied - 7; permits extended - 3; properties requiring enforcement action - 6; determinations of no permit required - 17; determinations that permit required for proposed activity - 9; and, permit transfers approved - 1.

Working in conjunction with the Conservation Commission, the Agency modified its fee schedule while making other amendments to its regulations. The by-laws were similarly amended.

As a result of Agency decisions, court actions on three separate projects remain pending at years end.

REINVEST PROGRAM COMMITTEE - Mayor Paul Gionfriddo
Nancy Conaway-Raczka
Vincent Amato
Francis Patnaude
Joann Lombardo

The Mini-Grant Business Reinvestment Pilot "REINVEST" Program was created in August 1990 to aid in the revitalization of the North End of the Central Business District by providing grants from the Economic Development Fund to commercial property owners and/or tenants who expand an existing retail business or establish a new retail business.

With an initial budget of \$50,000, REINVEST funded the following new businesses/business expansions during the past year:

John's Catering Service
26 Rear Portland Street

Pool Centre
26 Rear Portland Street

Ortiz Grocery
656 Main Street

Asian Food Market
642 Main Street

IBIS Books & Gallery
49 Rapallo Avenue

Mother's Pasta Grill & Bar
695 Main Street

Rosario's Tailoring
566 Main Street

The \$50,000 City investment to the North End businesses generated private investments exceeding \$136,000 by the above recipients.

In June 1991, the REINVEST Program was expanded to eligible retail business owners throughout the Central Business District. An additional \$50,000 from the Economic Development Fund was designated to fund 0-3 interest loan applications for the 1991 - 1992 fiscal year.

MIDDLETOWN REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY - Henry S. Novicki, Chairman
Matt Berlin
David Campanelli
Geraldine Duggan
Stephen Gionfriddo
William Howard*
Thomas Hutton
Steven Leinwand
Vincent Loffredo*
John Makrogianis
Mark Masselli*
Theodore Raczka
Elizabeth Rak-Roberts
Donald Russell
Guy Russo
Louise Russo
Stephen Shapiro
Joseph Tine
Gregory Woods

*resigned

The Middletown Redevelopment Agency exercises redevelopment powers authorized by the Connecticut General Statutes. During the past fiscal year, the Agency's activities centered on: the relationship between an undeveloped parcel on the Center Street urban renewal project and the proposed courthouse facility; completion of the Middlesex Mutual Assurance Company development project; and, planning and implementation of the North End renewal area.

The following highlight the year's activities:

The Agency maintained its interest in an undeveloped parcel on the southwest corner of Court Street and deKoven Drive within the Center Street urban renewal project. In March 1991, the Agency heard presentations from the developers that responded to the State's request for proposals for a Courthouse. Recommendations were sent to the CT Department of Public Works. In June, the Agency adopted a resolution approving: Northland/Daylar as the Courthouse developer; the development scheme; and, the construction schedule.

With the completion and opening of the twelve story office tower and the seven story parking garage by the Middlesex Mutual Assurance Company, the Agency turned its attention to the remaining items of acquisition and construction. Based upon negotiations, the Agency made its final recommendations to the Common Council for a settlement involving Middlesex Mutual, Mazzotta's Restaurant and Farmers and Mechanics Bank. Additionally, the Agency approved plans for a plaza behind Farmers & Mechanics Bank and for various public improvements between College and Court Streets in the former County Lane area. Construction is scheduled for the 1991 - 92 fiscal year.

Because of the importance of the Danforth family to the pewter industry, a complete archaeological study was conducted on the Danforth shop and house properties prior to the construction of the MMA parking garage. An exhaustive report was presented for placement in the local and State archives.

In another matter of historic interest, the Agency requested interest in preserving through relocation, the Henshaw/Boardman property formerly occupied by Mazzotta's Restaurant. The Redevelopment Agency accepted the proposal of a UCONN alumnus to dismantle and relocate the historic structures near Storrs as a part of the William Benton Museum of Art expansion program.

In setting the stage for future redevelopment activities, the North End Central Business District Urban Renewal Plan, prepared by DeCarlo & Doll, Inc. was modified and adopted. The plan presents development objectives, proposed land uses, techniques for urban renewal, and, an implementation agenda. In

response to Common Council consideration, the project will be expanded to include industrial lands and the powers of the Agency will be broadened beyond code enforcement and rehabilitation.

In early 1990, staff filed an application with the CT Department of Housing for designation of a Housing Development Zone in the North End. In response to a requirement for a local financial commitment, the Agency recommended a Tax Assessment Ordinance, subsequently adopted by the Common Council.

Due to the historic and architectural importance of the North End, the Agency appointed a committee to prepare Design Review Standards for application to rehabilitation and infill development.

The Agency continued to receive status reports on parcel E-2 located behind the YMCA, south of Union Street. Final plans remain uncompleted pending approval of long range plans for both the YMCA and Middlesex Hospital.

CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE - Loretta Cavanaugh, Chairperson
Vincent Amato
Susan Engelhart
Stephen Gadowski
Carmello Guiliano
Idella Howell
George Keithan
Diane Kelly
Daphne Kilbourne
Richard Kreh
Douglas Kulmacz*
Ann Loffredo*
Donna Mitkoski
Michael Moroni**
William Pillarella
Stephen Shapiro

*resigned
**deceased

The Citizen's Advisory Committee is organized to advise the Mayor and Common Council in matters concerning the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program as funded annually by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Middletown receives its annual funding notification from HUD in early Spring. Shortly thereafter, the Committee holds a public hearing which affords citizens the opportunity to comment on the proposed use of the funds. The projects which are funded are required to principally benefit individuals and families of low and moderate income. During the course of the 1990 - 1991 fiscal year, the following actions were taken:

- . Discussed and sent correspondence to the Housing Authority to expedite Marino Manor Housing Expansion Project.
- . Recommended to Common Council, an allocation of \$148,500 of CDBG Program Income received from Rehabilitation Loan Payments to five needy public agencies.
- . Regularly monitored the progress of and administrative fees schedule of the Greater Middletown Community Corp. concerning the administration of the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Programs.

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- . Monitored past CDBG recipients.
- . Recommended to the Common Council that \$82,684 of the 1990 CDBG Entitlement be allocated to the Community Health Center for a dental clinic which opened in April.
- . Recommended to the Common Council that the 1991 CDBG Entitlement of \$444,000 be appropriated to twelve agencies.
- . Reviewed CDBG funding proposals to ensure that activities to be funded met the federal CDBG Program national objectives.

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CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Ronald P. Klattenberg, Chairman
Alan Siniscalchi, Vice Chairman
Peter Bogue
Jane Brawerman
Joann Chace, Alternate
Katchen Coley
Melanie Giamei
Charles Harris
Eleanor Kelsey
Elsie Patton, Alternate
M. Christopher Peterson
Glenn Russo
Len Tundermann

Former Members Serving During 1990/91

John Nofi
Sandra Faraci
Hope Casper
Rosalie Otto

Although, the Middletown Conservation Commission has been in existence since the mid-1960's, it was not until the Common Council expanded the Commission from five to eleven regular members and three alternates, that it was able to adequately address many of the critical open space, land use and environmental issues now facing the City.

In 1990, the Commission approved its first official set of working bylaws, and established three standing committees to address broad environmental issues: the Open Space Preservation Committee which evaluates parcels of land for possible future acquisition; the Natural Resource Inventory Committee which works on city-wide open space mapping and identification of areas of valuable natural resources; and, the City Commissions Liaison Committee which responds to requests for comments from other City commissions or departments on projects or issues dealing with proposed development or regulations. Several of their accomplishments, projects and actions during 1990/1991 include:

- . Open Space Preservation Committee completed site visits and evaluations of eight (8) parcels of land submitted to the City for Open Space acquisition, and recommended that negotiations begin on four (4) of these parcels.
- . Natural Resource Inventory Committee played a key role in defining the scopes of work for two projects to be carried out by the Midstate Regional Planning Agency and the City's Planning and Zoning Department. The first - preparation of computerized open space maps for the City of Middletown - will provide essential information for final approval of the recently updated Plan of Development; and the second - development of a "Model Conservation Plan" for the southern portion of Middletown - will test various planning concepts and strategies in this area for possible future acceptance throughout the City.
- . City Commissions Liaison Committee commented on numerous development projects with applications before the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, Planning & Zoning Commission and other City committees, including recommending modifications to the McCutcheon Park Improvements Project which were successfully integrated into the project plans.

The Commission, as a whole:

- . with the Meriden and Berlin Conservation Commissions, established the Lamentation Mountain Tri-Town Project to develop a conservation plan for this unique trap rock geological formation, spanning three towns, three counties and three Regional Planning Agencies.
- . coordinated the City of Middletown's successful Earth Day activities which may become an annual event.

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- . prepared a cost analysis of existing fees for the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency, which led to major revisions in their structure and schedule of application fees.
- . Reviewed and commented on Drafts of the updated City of Middletown Plan of Development and revised Planning & Zoning Department Subdivision Regulations, to ensure adequate space for recreation and the protection of natural resources and wildlife habitat.

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

Thomas A. Chace
William Dillon
Michael Garafalo*
Joseph Guida
Jane Hall
Joseph Meehl
Edgar Pratt

*resigned

The Harbor Improvement Agency, in cooperation with other City departments, oversees and makes recommendations to the Common Council on all projects which impact the riverfront. Its principal on-going project is the Army Corps of Engineers Streambank Protection Plan at River Road and Eastern Drive.

During 1990-1991, the Agency also considered alterations to the Yacht Club building, sponsored the development of landscape plans for River Road and the reconstructed Route 9; contributed informational materials about Middletown's role in Connecticut River conservation and development to the October 1990 Rockfall Symposium (which focused on the river), and to the Department of Environmental Protection's "Rivers" publication in the spring. It also began negotiations to acquire more property on the Connecticut River, and supported the City's successful emergency repairs to the bulkheads at Harborpark. The Agency continued to pursue solutions for requests for a boat launch, permits for the Army Corps of Engineers' and Water Department's projects, view clearing on Route 9, and future riverfront land acquisitions.