

Mayor's
Copy

ANNUAL REPORT 91-92
MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT OFFICE
WILLIAM M. KUEHN, JR., DIRECTOR



Municipal Development staff
Barbara Santangelo and Cindy Wilcox
help the Garden Club plant
the Main Street planters for the
Holidays

Municipal Development Office

Staff as of 07/01/91

William M. Kuehn, Jr.
Linda A. Ozga
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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. Economic Development Task Force
2. Economic Development Committee
3. Redevelopment Agency
4. Harbor Improvement Agency
5. Middletown Housing Partnership/Middletown Housing Partnership Trust
6. Citizen's Advisory Committee
7. Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Agency
8. Conservation Commission
9. Urban Forestry Commission

In addition to the foregoing staff assignments, the Municipal Development Office works with the Shepherd Home Liaison Committee and takes responsibility for the grants administration for the Eddy Center Emergency Shelter, the Private Industry Council, the State of CT Rental Rehabilitation Program, among others; and continues to pursue new grants to support the efforts of its committees/agencies and the goals of the Department.

In 1992, the Municipal Development Office will focus more on Economic Development as the environmental Commissions move to the Planning Office.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

The Economic Development Task Force represents a broad range of expertise from business/industry/education, and was appointed by Mayor Garafalo to assist the City in implementing aggressive development policies and strategies. To do this, the Task Force considers and discusses the tools required by the City to market and sell itself, with an end product of increased jobs and taxes.

Over the first few months of Task Force meetings, the group engaged in a thorough discussion of the City's assets and debits; and set about under three subcommittees to address these features.

The subcommittees were broken down into the functional areas of: I-91 Industrial Area; the Downtown; and, Route 9 South. At fiscal year's end, each of the three subcommittees had made recommendations to address debits and to implement identified goals, and they had gone on record to officially support several initiatives, which had been placed before other City agencies for their action.

While the Economic Development Committee has been designated as the prime agency for implementation measures, the initiatives of the Economic Development Task Force have already been felt by the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Chamber of Commerce.

Moving into the next fiscal year, the Economic Development Task Force intends to prepare a menu of incentive programs which will aid in the retention of the existing businesses and attraction of new business to the City.

ECONOMIC (MUNICIPAL) DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The Economic Development Committee (EDC) (formerly the Municipal Development Committee) is comprised of five members of the Common Council who serve as the development arm of the City. The Committee monitors the administrative progress of a wide spectrum of development projects and establishes new policies on economic development initiatives. During the past fiscal year, the EDC approved and supported the following projects:

Promotional Brochure: Retained Anagnostis Associates for the production of a promotional document for the City of Middletown, which was approved in September, and made its debut at the Middlesex EXPO '91. This six-page color brochure with inserts continues to be instrumental in promoting business growth.

Main Street Walking Tour: Financially supported the printing and production of a self-guided Walking Tour of Main Street written by the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust (GMPT), and made available to residents and visitors.

Marino Manor Housing Expansion Project: Received proposals and presentations for the development of additional elderly housing units at Marino Manor from the Housing Authority and Affordable Housing Ventures, Inc. Affordable Housing Ventures, Inc. was chosen to develop the new units as a turnkey project to be owned by the Housing Authority. The Committee and staff pursued further arrangements between the two proponents, and continue to monitor the elderly housing expansion project.

North End Sign: Sponsored the construction of a "Welcome to Middletown Sign" which was installed at the northern "Gateway" to the City on the large Main Street island.

Youth Conservation Corp: Supported the Summer 1991 YCC program which included numerous projects during an eight week period; most notably the creation of a two mile hiking trail at McCutcheon Park and pruning City trees along nineteen downtown streets.

Business Retention Survey: Requested appropriation of \$10,000 and retained Martin Belair & Company to conduct a Business Retention Survey. The survey included personal visits to, and compilation of comprehensive data from one hundred of Middletown's businesses representing manufacturing, retail, and the service sector. Results will be presented to the Committee in September.

Main Street Planters: Approved addition of thirty half-whiskey barrel planters along the south end of Main Street, by the YCC. In November, the Middletown Garden Club again decorated all seventy Main Street Planters for the holiday season; and likewise, in May, the Junior Women's Club planted them for spring.

REINVEST Loan Program: Changed the guidelines for the City's REINVEST Loan Program to expand it to offer increased financial incentives to existing and new businesses throughout the City -- not just within the Central Business District. The EDC authorized another round of REINVEST Loan Applications beginning June 2nd - August 3rd.

North End Industrial Area: Assumed the role of overseeing the proposed North End Industrial Area Project. By Spring 1992, staff had received the Assistance Agreements from the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic Development and reviewed them with staff and officials from Industry for Middletown (INFORM).

Spring Intern: Sponsored a graduate student intern from the Department of City and Regional Planning of the University of North Carolina and acceptance of her report with commendations. The report entitled "Middletown, Connecticut Economic Development Analysis", by Caroline Samuels will be a useful tool for the Economic Development Committee.

North End Housing & Community Development Program: Plans for the development of the Ferry/Green Street Playground were coordinated with Park & Rec, the Recycling Coordinator and City Forester; the Green Street sidewalks with Public Works, and applications for moderate rate rental rehabilitation projects received by Greater Middletown Community Corporation. The Committee and staff continue to oversee this ongoing project.

MIDDLETOWN REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

The Middletown Redevelopment Agency exercises redevelopment powers authorized by the Connecticut General Statutes. During the past fiscal year, the Agency's activities focused upon three project areas: completion of the Middlesex Mutual Assurance Company Development Project; a new agreement on Parcel E-2 of the Metro South Urban Renewal Project; and, revisions to the draft plan for the North End CBD/Urban Renewal Project Area.

Following are the highlights of the Agency's annual activities:

- . In 1987, the Redevelopment Agency approved the use of an undeveloped redevelopment parcel behind the YMCA as parking for Middlesex Hospital. That agreement expired in early 1992. As a result of negotiations involving the YMCA, Middlesex Hospital and the Redevelopment Agency, an extension of that use was authorized for up to ten (10) years with annual payments from the Hospital to be set aside in an escrow account for use by the YMCA for implementing the development plan for the site.
- . Considering the Middlesex Mutual Development Project, all land acquisition activities were completed in the months of July, August and September 1991 whereby the Redevelopment Agency purchased the former Mazzotta's Restaurant and conveyed the land to Middlesex Mutual Assurance Company. During the winter months, the County Lane construction project was put to bid with Farmers & Mechanics Bank being a financial partner in that project. Construction was initiated in April 1992, by Building Supply Corp. of Middletown. The project is scheduled for completion in September 1992.
- . An interesting spin-off of the Middlesex Mutual Project was the awarding of the historic Henshaw/Boardman House (formerly Mazzotta's Restaurant)

for dismantling and relocating on a site near the UCONN Campus as part of the expansion of the William Benton Museum of Art. The Henshaw/Boardman House was first constructed in 1755 with an addition in 1777. All the original fabric historic members of the structure were dismantled during the winter months of 1991/1992, and transported off site for storage until such time as a mini-18th Century village of five structures can be recreated near Storrs.

- . Towards the end of the fiscal year, most of the Agency's energies were devoted to updating the North End CBD/Urban Renewal Project Plan for adoption by the Redevelopment Agency and the Common Council in the late Summer 1992. To that end, the Redevelopment Agency approved modifications to the project boundary, and directed that the revised plan include specific areas for acquisition. The Agency is optimistic that, in the next fiscal year, the City of Middletown will have an adopted plan. By working together with the Planning & Zoning staff, the implementation process for major improvements to the downtown area will begin.

HARBOR IMPROVEMENT AGENCY

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. The Agency itself underwent some reorganizational changes; saw the appointment of four new members; and set itself up with subcommittees committed to broad planning strategies for the future of Middletown's waterfront development and management.

In Fiscal Year 1991-92, its principal on-going projects were the Army Corps of Engineers Streambank Protection Project at River Road and Eastern Drive, and acquisition of the "Vinci Parcel" as an addition to Harborpark. The Streambank Protection Project received its final permits in the fall and, after undergoing final design changes, went out to bid in the Spring. The Vinci Property was purchased by the City on January 31, 1992 with funds from the Connecticut River Trust (CRT) and CT Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and will be developed as an addition to the south end of Harborpark. The Agency oversaw all the grant proposals, and developed an RFP for future development of this key parcel of riverfront land.

In addition, the Harbor Improvement Agency:

- . Pursued the planning of the Streambank Protection project for the wellfields.
- . Kept informed about the successful repair of the Harborpark bulkheads.
- . Saw the groundbreaking for the new Wesleyan Boathouse.
- . Entertained a proposal for a Pool Bar at the Yacht Club Building.
- . Denied a proposal to use the Vinci Parcel for parking for the restaurant.
- . Reviewed grant applications to both CRT and DEP for the Vinci Parcel.
- . Welcomed the DEP River Photo Contest scheduled for Fall 1992.

In its initiatives for the future, the Agency is considering the establishment of a Harbor Management Plan and the tunnelling of Route 9 in order to connect Harborpark to the downtown.

MIDDLETOWN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP/MIDDLETOWN HOUSING PARTNERSHIP TRUST

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, Economic Development, Regional Planning and Housing Authority; and from non-profit housing developers, realtors, bankers, educators and housing advocates in the private sector. The Middletown Housing Partnership Trust is an independent, private non-profit, Community Land Trust created in 1990 by the Partnership in order 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.

In fiscal year 1991-92, the activities of the Partnership started with the final designation of The Connection Fund as the preferred developer of single family affordable housing on State Surplus property on Long Lane, after a comprehensive and difficult selection process. The choice was confirmed by the Council and remitted to the State Department of Housing which was conducting its own selection process.

Meanwhile, the MHP formed a subcommittee to help the Municipal Development Director with the compilation of Middletown's CHAS (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy); continued to pursue the completion of an affordable housing development under the CT Housing Partnership Program (see MHPT/Military Housing); and focused on three areas for future projects which

are: 1) Urban Homesteading, 2) Avenues for Partnership support of non-profit housing developers, and 3) Development of Educational programs for new homebuyers and renters with low and moderate incomes.

The single most distinctive achievement this year came through the Middletown Housing Partnership Trust with the final purchase of the Military Housing on June 30, 1992. After over three years of negotiation with the Army, CHFA and the State DOH, the Trust took possession of 16 three-bedroom single-family homes; and will sell them to moderate income families, while holding the land in a Community Land Trust. A lottery was advertised in October; over 133 people applied, 87 of which met the eligibility standards which included such items as income guidelines and family composition. Military families were guaranteed options to buy their homes, and six of the houses were reserved for people currently in subsidized housing in Middletown. The lottery was conducted in December and the top 16 "winners" urged to pre-qualify for the CHFA mortgages. Finally, the Rotary Club generously offered to paint the houses before the new buyers moved in, and the Middletown Housing Partnership Trust made plans for their final rehabilitation before resale.

CITIZEN'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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). This year, Middletown received its annual grant funding notification from HUD in February. Shortly thereafter, the Committee held a public hearing to allow citizens and citizen groups the opportunity to comment on the proposed use of the funds. The projects which are to be funded must provide a principal benefit of individuals and families of low and moderate incomes. During the course of the 1991 - 1992 fiscal year, the following actions were taken, and the following projects were completed/implemented:

- . In August the Committee recommended an allocation of \$130,000 of CDBG Program Income received from Rehabilitation Loan Payments to fund two activities to promote safe, decent, sanitary and affordable housing opportunities for our lower income residents - 1) Middletown's Residential Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program - \$84,000; and, 2) Equity in Housing of Middletown, Inc. for housing acquisition for limited equity affordable home ownership - \$46,000.
- . During fiscal year 91-92, over fifty housing units were renovated/completed utilizing CDBG Residential Rehabilitation Loan Program monies.
- . In March, Equity in Housing of Middletown, Inc. purchased a four family house at 45 Park Place for limited equity, affordable home ownership.

In Fall 1991, the activities which were funded and implemented all aimed at improving the public service and housing opportunities available to low and moderate income residents and included the following:

- . Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce started a Workfare Worker Preparation Program. After six months of operation, ten program participants attained employment through their participation in the program. Additionally, the secondary program benefit to City residents, is the beautification of the Downtown Business District thanks to the maintenance projects completed daily by this program.
- . The 2nd Floor Residence Doors at the Middlesex YMCA were replaced with attractive new doors that meet building and fire codes.
- . In September, the Connection, Inc.'s Women and Children's Center opened. By April, the Center's staff witnessed the arrival of six healthy babies. This CDBG activity also received an award from the Connecticut Community Development Association.
- . In May, the Committee recommended to the Common Council that the 1992 CDBG Entitlement Grant and other CDBG Program funds totalling \$741,433 be appropriated to fund fourteen different activities.
- . Lastly, the Committee continued to review CDBG funding activities to ensure that the activities funded met the federal CDBG Program national objectives.

INLAND WETLANDS AND WATERCOURSES AGENCY

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 1991-1992 fiscal year, the Agency met on sixteen (16) occasions. Those meetings resulted in the Agency conducting public hearings on 19 applications and issuing the following decisions: permit applications approved - 35; permit applications denied - 0; permits extended - 2; properties requiring enforcement action - 7; determinations of no permit required - 29; permit transfers approved - 0; permits amended or modified - 10, and bonds released - 2.

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

MIDDLETOWN CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Middletown Conservation Commission addresses a broad range of environmental issues; participates with other towns and non-profit agencies on a variety of projects; and acts in its statutory capacity as an advisory body for other City Agencies, Commissions and Departments on land use issues involving open space conservation. It has three standing committees: The Open Space Preservation Committee which evaluates parcels of land for possible future acquisition; the Natural Resources 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. In addition, there may be ad hoc committees established on a project by project basis.

1991 was an award winning year for the Conservation Commission. It received the "Conservation Commission of the Year" award from CACIWC and the Municipality of the Year from Middlesex County Soil & Water Conservation District for the purchase for the City of Middletown of four open space parcels comprising over 165 acres. One of its members was also awarded special commendations by both organizations. After the purchase of the initial parcels, the Open Space Preservation Committee embarked on the development of stewardship plans for them, as well as started phase II evaluations of new open space parcels offered to the City. Through the City Commission Liaison Committee, the Conservation Commission reviewed and made recommendations to other agencies on several development proposals as well as on new subdivision regulations, and cluster zoning regulations. The Natural Resources Committee continued to pursue its goals of developing a Natural Resource Inventory and

Map, and a South Middletown Conservation Plan in conjunction with the Planning Department and Midstate Regional Planning Agency.

On more broad environmental issues, the Commission entertained presentations from some of their members and guest speakers on:

- . State of Connecticut Aquifer Protection Program
- . The Cenacle and its property
- . Hazardous Waste Collection Day
- . Stormwater Management
- . Fees in Lieu of Open Space
- . Mattabassett River Non-Point Pollution Project of EPA
- . Pesticide Applications Groundwater Impacts
- . Pingo Potholes
- . Erosion on Route 9.

They participated with the Conservation Commissions and staffs of Meriden and Berlin, Midstate Regional Planning Agency and UCONN Extension Service on development of a Tri-town plan of conservation and development for Lamentation Mountain; and with the representatives of Durham and Middlefield on the creation of a greenway along the Coginchaug River.

URBAN FORESTRY COMMISSION

The Urban Forestry Commission is the City Agency designated by ordinance to oversee the welfare of Middletown's Urban Forest. Based on the Tree Inventory and 5-year Management Plan compiled as a result of Middletown's designation for the State's Pilot Project, the Commission co-ordinates the tree maintenance, replacement and restocking requirements of the plan with the resources available to each City Department involved with trees.

1991-92 was a year of balancing the work program as prescribed by the Management Plan, with responses to emergencies as they were directed to the Department of Public Works and the Tree Warden. Using the services of consulting City Forester, Bruce Spaman, elements of the annual work program developed for City Departments included:

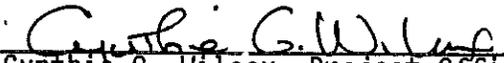
- . Priority I maintenance work
- . Spring Planting Plan for over 338 trees & shrubs
- . Planting specifications
- . Construction specifications to protect trees
- . Inventories and recommendations for the engineering firms involved with Public Works and CSO projects

Emergency actions included responses to damage from Hurricane Bob, and to the damage resulting from the reconstruction of Long Lane through the Arboretum. Through all the above projects, the Commission saw an increased citizen awareness and interest in the City's Urban Forest; as well as increased co-operation from the City departments involved with construction in the protection of trees. The City Forester is now consulted on all public construction jobs involving trees.

Apart from the tree program, the Urban Forestry Commission also:

- . Received an "Arbor Day Award Certificate of Merit" from the National Arbor Day Foundation.
- . Received "Tree City U.S.A." Designation for 1991.
- . Reviewed and made recommendations on tree issues (which were adopted), to the Planning & Zoning Commission for new subdivision regulations.
- . Conducted an Arbor Day Ceremony and Tree Planting at the Ferry/Green Street Playground enlisting the help of 14 local children and the Police as Adopt-A-Tree sponsors.
- . Encouraged and participated in Arbor Day/Earth Day tree planting efforts by non-profit groups such as the Children's Forestry Project, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Garden Club.
- . Designed, displayed and encouraged the establishment of tree nurseries at local schools.
- . Applied for, and received, matching funds from the "America the Beautiful" program to supplement the budget for the City Forester.
- . Continued to study better standards, techniques and specifications for the improvement of Middletown's Urban Forest.

Submitted and
edited by:


Cynthia G. Wilcox, Project Officer

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