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**CITY OF MIDDLETOWN  
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

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**MINUTES**

*December-03-03*

**Present**

H. NOVICKI  
P. BUSARI  
M. LONG  
J. ROBINSON  
W. DREAHER  
J. TINE  
J. MAKROGIANIS  
J. FORTUNA  
J. ALEXANDER  
S. GIONFRIDDO  
J. COUGHLIN  
L. RUSSO  
F. GANGULI

**Absent**

R. SANTANGELO  
G. DALEY  
S. SHAPIRO

**Also Present**

M. WACKERS  
W. WARNER  
M. TAYLOR  
C. RODENHIZER  
C. PRICE  
L. BREWSTER  
N. MEYERS  
L. MCMILLIAN  
P. PATTON  
P. NUCCI  
L. SANTIAGO  
K. WINSTON  
J. YARROW  
C. WIDMER  
R. ROSENTHAL  
R. LISKER

Hank Novicki called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

Hank Novicki moved to review the minutes from the previous meeting in May. Stephen Gionfriddo motioned to approve the minutes. John Makrogianis seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Seeing that there was no old business, Hank Novicki moved the agenda to new business.

First, William Warner presented the recent progress concerning the Miller/Bridge Street project. In the time since the last meeting, the Planning Department has been working on negotiating with the property owners that the Redevelopment Agency approved. As of January 13, 2004, the Planning Department has been successful in secure two agreements, one of \$75,000 for the church at 115 Bridge Street and another of \$56,000 of two condemned buildings at 25 & 27 Miller Street. One more property at 15 Miller Street is still under negotiations, and a resolution is expected at sometime in the near future. The like scenario for this property would be some type of property swap using a house on Wadsworth Street that the City has rights to acquire from the State. Currently, there is \$164,866 left to spend on the swap and for demolition of all the structures being acquired.

Second, William Warner presented a film producer by the children of the North End and said it is a good example of one of the positive achievements in the North End and puts a human face on the need for change there.

Third, William Warner presented to the Agency that the an assessment for the North End. William Warner had sent the members a letter with the following conclusions: 1) NEAT is an incredible asset that must be supported. 2) The Redevelopment Plan will not be implemented with the NEHI model. 3) Richman has the experience and the resources to implement this redevelopment plan. 4) NEHI is working with Richman but I have my doubts whether a workable agreement is possible with (5) different entities all looking for a piece of the pie. William Warner went on to explain that since these conclusion were made public an number of recent development have occurred: 1) The Connection has offered to act as lead developer. 2) The Richman Group has worked hard at an agreement with NEHI, but NEHI has stopped negotiations with Richman. 3) The Housing Authority has expressed an interest in the North End project. Given these

developments, William Warner suggested the following: 1) Considering the progress NEAT, Wesleyan Arts Center and the recent news of the Goodspeed there is a heightened interest in downtown. 2) The Redevelopment Agency should take the opportunity to issue a Request for Proposal and select the most qualified developer who can maintain or gain the neighborhood's support.

The Agency's reaction to the recommendation approval and directed the Agency's staff to set up a meeting in executive session in two or three weeks to hear from interested developers about their plans, expertise, and resources for successful implementation of the North End Redevelopment Plan. Members of the Agency made the following comments or asked the following questions:

John Robinson stated that the City needs to say what they can offer to any developer. William Warner said that a report could be put together for the Agency, but of the top of his head he stated that, the ability to do eminent domain, acquire and clear properties, and use Community Development Block Grant funds could all be done with minimal impact on the City's budget.

Hank Novicki asked that we will need to see the original plan in order to know what the City can do and to rate the potential developers. William Warner replied that we can get that information to the members and do a brief summary before any potential developer presents.

John Robinson stated that I have seen so many plan for the North End, we should be talking about commitments and given a developer something they can run with.

Stephen Gionfriddo replied that I would take a less than perfect plan that can be accomplish than a perfect plan that can not be implemented.

Stephen Gionfriddo asked when can this meeting be setup. William Warner replied that it can be done within two weeks and all the potential developers have had sometime to work on this project.

Jennifer Alexander stated that we need to be clear about how flexible we are, about how much a developer can change to the approved plan and co-inside with our principles, in addition to making sure the financials allow for low and moderate residents to continue to afford to live in the North End.

With no more comments from the Agency, the Chair opened the floor to public comment.

Peter Patton of Wesleyan University reported that the Greens Street Arts Center is progressing quickly and expects to open its door in December. Wesleyan see that it is in partnership with NEAT and encourages NEAT's efforts and any developer should be aware of this. Peter Patton went on to say that the Arts Center depends on the cooperation of the neighborhood.

Lydia Brewster reported that a sequel is in progress, which will look at the past 100-years of the North End. She went on to state that while it is great to hear about the Goodspeed, she reminded everyone that the residents have been wanting good housing and to have the plan implemented for a number of years now. Lydia Brewster reminded everyone that NEHI was stalled by a slow city political process, poor economic times, and NEHI's own cumbersome internal processes. We, as the developers have taken what we have learned from Richman to heart, and we feel William Warner is correct, one developer is needed. We encourage the Connection, but that is not to say we will not work with other developers who will work with the community. What NEAT continues to want as this progresses is that the community has a voice and make the North End a place were people choose to be, not a place for those with no where else to go.

Carl Rodenhizer stated that the Connection is uniquely qualified and eager to serve as lead developer, citing 15 years of local housing development projects, such as Liberty Commons. The Connection is also qualified by being a non-profit, allowing it to pursue the least costly avenues for financing. The Connection has also being involved since the beginning.

Peter Nucci also reiterated many of the comments that Carl touched on.

Lois Santiago stated that she wanted to see this plan be implemented and that a developer be selected soon.

Joyce Yarrow commented that Habitat for Humanity would be here to support any effort the Redevelopment Agency choose and expressed great pleasure in seeing so many eager stakeholders addressing this issue, something that does not exist anywhere else in Connecticut.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Michiel Wackers, Community Development Specialist