

COMMISSION ON THE CITY PLAN AND ZONING - PUBLIC HEARING - WEDNESDAY -
JANUARY 14, 1970 - COUNCIL CHAMBERS - MUNICIPAL BUILDING - MIDDLETOWN,
CONNECTICUT

Commission Edward F. Button, Chairman
Members Philip M. Salafia, Vice-Chairman
Present: Joseph W. Masselli, Secretary
John J. Higgins
James T. Rolle, alternate
Joseph P. Otfinoski, alternate

Member
Absent: Robert F. Chamberlain

Staff George Reif, Director
Present: William Kuehn, Jr.
Althea Rinaldi
Patricia Hutton

Others S. Newcomer, Director Housing Authority
Present: J. Paton, Secretary Wesleyan University
S. Beinhorn, Middletown Press Reporter
H. Clew, Hartford Courant Reporter
and approximately twenty members of the public-at-large.

Chairman Button called the meeting to order at 7:32 P.M.

CHM. BUTTON: I will now open this Public Hearing. I will ask the Secretary to read the call of the meeting. I see that Mr. Chamberlain isn't here. I will appoint Mr. Rolle to sit in Mr. Chamberlain's place.

COMM. MASSELLI: MIDDLETOWN COMMISSION ON THE CITY PLAN AND ZONING,
JANUARY 14, 1970, 7:34 P.M. COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MUNICIPAL BUILDING
for the following purposes:

To hear a request for a Special Exception as required by Section 60 and 61 of the Zoning Code - First Item for a proposed multi-family housing off Walnut Street to be named Maplewood Terrace.

I have a letter from MLTW/Moore Turnbull -

Dear Mr. Button:

We are submitting a 50 unit housing project, Maplewood Terrace, to the City Planning Commission for review and for hearing at the January, 1970 meeting of the City Planning Commission. Maplewood Terrace is a low income housing project sponsored by H.U.D. under the turnkey method for the Middletown Housing Authority.

For review we are submitting six copies of the site plan, preliminary plans and elevations showing type of construction and facing material and a statement indicating use and unit breakdowns.

Very truly yours,
Lawrence A. Linder

That is all Mr. Chairman.

CHM. BUTTON: Public Works?

COMM. MASSELLI: I have correspondence from the Department of Public Works, re: Maplewood Terrace.

We have reviewed the above referenced project and offer the following comment:

The site plan should be sealed by a Connecticut Registered Professional Engineer.

The developer should indicate size, types and inverts of proposed storm and sanitary sewer lines. The developer should revise the storm sewer layout as indicated in red on the attached drawing.

Very truly yours,
John C. O'Brien

That is all Mr. Chairman.

CHM. BUTTON: Thank you. The proponents for the petition please come forward.

MR. NEWCOMER: Mr. Chairman, Sam Newcomer of the Housing Authority of the City of Middletown. We request a Special Exception for multi-family use for Maplewood Terrace. If I may be permitted briefly to summarize the background.

First and perhaps the most important, Maplewood Terrace is one vital element in the total Renewal Program of the City of Middletown. We are obliged as a city to provide a wide variety of choices of housing for families to be relocated from the clearance areas. This will be one such choice if we are permitted to build it.

There are, if I may summarize from a study which was the initial study made by Redevelopment as it began their submission to HUD and is now outdated but will show for our purposes, a sufficiently clear need. There are a total of four hundred forty-two (442) families to be relocated; Two hundred seventy-one (271) white and One hundred seventy-two (172) black. Of those families, there are seventy-one (71) white families and ninety-one (91) black families who would be eligible for public housing. A total of One hundred sixty-two (162) families eligible for public housing who are going to be moved by relocation. We have a clear public responsibility to help provide housing for these families.

Furthermore, it is my opinion that public housing provides one element of necessary public service in a community that aids and makes an important contribution to the general health and welfare of the community.

One of the pleasures of my job when I assumed it a little over a year ago, has been to receive visits from a number of prominent Middletown residents who stopped by to tell me that they got their start at Long River Village. Public housing can provide a new opportunity - a new start for the development of responsible citizens in our town.

Location - off of Walnut Street of this proposed project is a part of the plan of the Housing Authority to buy and develop on scattered sites in many areas throughout the city, small developments of public housing. This location happens to be very near the only remaining public bus transportation. Not far from schools and it is within walking distance of downtown and near many sources of employment to such families and the particular nature of the property that is owned by the Housing Site Development will allow us to provide a marvelous playground in the sense of openness and connected with the outdoors there.

The property is going to be developed by the Greater Middletown Community Corporation, a non-profit local developer, under the terms of a grant of the State of Connecticut, Housing Site Development Plan 3-107. The Greater Middletown Community Corporation has engaged the firm of Moore and Turnbull and their architect is here to present the site plan to you. I would like to ask Mr. Tibbetts from Greater Middletown Community Corporation to present his program.

MR. TIBBETTS: Mr. Chairman, I am on the Board of Directors of the Greater Middletown Community Corporation. We have been working on this project for a number of months. All that I would like to lend is a statement that we have finished forty-five (45) units at Wadsworth Grove for the moderate income and in our study there we interviewed some One hundred seventy (170) people to try and pick out the people who could qualify for Wadsworth Grove which is a moderate income housing. Out of this series of interviews we found a great need for people who have children to find a place to live.

We have apartment buildings going up here in town, but if you have a child, you cannot get in and the Wadsworth Grove site shifted the thing around and you couldn't get into Wadsworth Grove unless you had children. And in this Maplewood Terrace development, it is being developed for people with children. There are five, six, four and three and some two bedroom units out there so it is heavily loaded for families that have children and the rent schedule under this public housing is such that they can move in and have good accommodations.

Another point that I would like to make is that we are trying to set a mode in our developments to have something that doesn't look like an institution. Something that does have interesting open land, has open space to play and doesn't look like a barracks as you can see on some of the housing developments around the state. We have tried to develop our program with this thought in mind.

Another interesting fact is that you have probably read where money is tight especially construction money at this time. We are very fortunate in being able to have a relationship with Wesleyan University. Monsignor McKenna, President of the Greater Middletown Community Corporation is borrowing the construction money from Wesleyan for this project. Therefore, everything being equal, we should be able to bring this project through and with the help of you and your staff here and the rest of the community, I think we can build a very good turnkey project and the need is certainly there and we will try to put out a very good project for you. Thank you.

MR. NEWCOMER: I would like to call on the architect, Mr. Larry Linder of Moore and Turnbull.

MR. LINDER: Thank you Sam. I will explain the project briefly from here and then if there are any questions I will go over to the site plan and answer them specifically.

The general site disposition is next to a four lane highway, on the south side bounded on the west side by Maple Street and on the north side by the back yards of the residences on Walnut Street, on the east side by State land and the backyards from an adjacent street. It is a 5.8 acres of open and wooded land and gently rolling to the top and then falling away to a stream.

The site has many nice trees on it, many of which we hope to save and some of which in the back of the site we hope to develop into park. The park will be one of the three play areas in the project. The park will be for the adults and old children. There will also be a tot lot and a playground for intermediate aged children.

The road into the project is set up as you can see on the site plan with a temporary turn-around. It is hoped that eventually the road would connect around north to Omo Street. In the meantime a temporary turn-around is provided for in this instance before the entrance to private parking for the units. Parking is the required ratio of one and one half to one.

The road is situated at the north side of the site running east/west so as to provide access in a long narrow site, access that is one single road and it is an expensive road to say the least because it only serves houses on one side. We have, as Mr. Tibbetts pointed out, many different kinds of units. The two's and three's are set up in small buildings, four units per building. We call it a quadruplex vs duplex.

The quadruplexes are located at the narrow end of the site. The quadruplexes having the two and three bedrooms means that the density at the narrow end of the site across the street is the lowest. As you go back into the site, first there are three bedrooms, six bedrooms, fours and fives. Also the small quadruplexes, being on the scale of a house on Maple Street..Walnut Street, sorry, would blend in with the rhythm and

cadence of the existing houses. This is scaled so that it will do that and located hopefully so that it will do that.

The materials we've chosen so far is wood siding with painted trim. The traditional New England kind of in vocabulary construction materials and hopefully it will blend in with the old finer buildings in the area.

In general, this is a project with many, many children and the relationship between buildings, play, yards and streets is very important and one which we are trying to work out with these determinants in mind and in general I think so far we have done well. If there are any questions, I will be glad to go to the site plan...

MR. NEWCOMER: The question of the seal..

MR. LINDER: Oh, on the seal. The drawings will be sealed and the inverts and the layout of the storm water and sewage system will be revised in consultation with the Public Works.

COMM. BUTTON: What is the length of the cul de sac?

MR. LINDER: Four hundred feet.

CHM. BUTTON: How many parking spaces do you have provided?

MR. LINDER: Seventy-five which is one and one half to one.

CHM. BUTTON: I can't see the plan from here but do you have any parking where they will be backing out onto the...

MR. LINDER: No, absolutely none. There are two lots. One small one for nine cars at the front of the site and one large lot for the remaining cars off, completely off the public right-of-way.

COMM. MASSELLI: Approximately what area playground in square footage or acreage?

MR. LINDER: Well, the park at the back is over two acres. There are many beautiful trees, I think silver maples. They grow up and form an umbrella and the foliage starts about ten or twelve feet from the ground and we intend to leave that entirely along and to develop only one pedestrian bridge so that you will be able to cross the stream so that both sides will be useable and we will also develop on a higher less treed ground, a basketball court.

COMM. MASSELLI: Excellent.

MR. LINDER: The basketball court and park will be for the adults and older children.

COMM. MASSELLI: That's an excellent idea. Usually we are short shrifted on playground areas for children. Here with so many children we need more than usual. This is an excellent idea.

MR. LINDER: The basketball court is located far enough away so that the noise and the screaming from that won't disturb the units. The tot lot and intermediate playgrounds are interval parts of the interior of the project. Both of these are to be supervised by adults if nothing else than from their window. Both of them are closed and will be well equipped.

CHM. BUTTON: Does anyone else wish to speak? If not, I will declare this hearing closed. Mr. Secretary, will you call the order of the next item?

COMM. MASSELLI: Middletown Commission on the City Plan and Zoning, Public Hearing, January 14, 1970, at 7:49 P.M., Council Chambers, Municipal Building, Middletown, Connecticut to hear a request for Special Exception as required by Section 60 and 61 of the Zoning Code for a proposed multi-unit dwelling structure for the elderly on William Street near Main Street.

I have correspondence from the Fusco-Amatruda Company -

Re: Proposed Housing for the Elderly in Middletown
Urban Renewal Project No. 2 Parcel A-5

Gentlemen: The Fusco-Amatruda Company has recently been advised that, as named developer for Low Rent Housing for the Elderly on William Street in Urban Renewal Project No. 2., we must file a request for a "Special Exceptions" with the Zoning Commission.

We are currently proceeding with the finalization of preliminary drawings for our "Turnkey" program for a high rise structure consisting of 125 dwelling units for the elderly and related apartments. Prior to continuing further with this scheme, we respectfully request that a special exception be granted to permit us to develop this property for multi-unit use for Housing for the Elderly.

Regarding parking facilities for the occupants of this project, we have tentatively planned parking areas to accommodate approximately 35 cars, which, we believe, complies with Zoning Codes. However, the public Senior Citizen's Center which is being planned as part of this complex will not have onsite parking facilities. We have been advised that the Redevelopment Agency is currently planning additional off-site parking areas which will be available to the patrons of the Center. We, therefore, respectfully request that a special exception be granted regarding the parking requirements for public facilities.

We are most anxious to continue with our plans toward starting construction at the jobsite in the spring of 1970, and look forward to the successful completion and acceptance by the Housing Authority of the City of Middletown. We hope that you will judge our request favorably. Please advise us accordingly.

Respectfully yours,
THE FUSCO-AMATRUDA COMPANY
Edmund J. Fusco,
President

CHM. BUTTON: Mr. Kaplan, would you care to read the letter from the Chairman of the Redevelopment Agency?

MR. KAPLAN: Mr. Edward F. Button, Chairman
Commission on the City Plan and Zoning
Municipal Building
Middletown, Connecticut

Dear Mr. Button:

I would like to take this opportunity to respond to your letter of December 23 to the Mayor which was forwarded to me, concerning parking for the proposed housing for the elderly.

Several meetings have been held with representation of the religious institutions and the funeral homes located on the block bounded by Church, Main, William and Broad Streets. It is hoped that renewal of the block, which is adjacent to the new housing for the elderly, will provide a distinctive theme, an important visual element, and a pleasant atmosphere as both an entry to and an exit from the varied activities of downtown. It is the intention of the Redevelopment Agency to encourage the institutionally-oriented uses already located on this block to expand their services and facilities so they can adequately meet current and future needs, while simultaneously strengthening their commitments to downtown. Through a systematic program of relocation of all but the two churches, a synagogue, and the two funeral homes, it is planned that the block will function as a focus of compatible and mutually supportive uses.

In order to do this effectively, we must address ourselves to the provision of the amenities and facilities which will insure that this effort will be an asset to downtown. In accordance with the suggestions contained in your letter, it will be our intention to incorporate a consolidated parking area into the center of the block so that each of the buildings on the block will have easy access to it. As future needs dictate, the air rights above this area would be used for a parking structure.

It is both consistent with the intent of this plan and advantageous to downtown to make parking available to meet the needs of the senior citizen center of elderly housing immediately to the north. Although final commitments cannot be made at this stage for the method of ownership, construction, administration and maintenance of a parking facility on this block, the Redevelopment Agency will require that firm assurances be given prior to the transfer of any land for redevelopment purposes. I appreciate your insights into the problem and your initiative in drawing up a proposal to guide us.

Very truly yours,
GEORGE ACHENBACH
Chairman

CHM. BUTTON: Thank you. Any other correspondence?

COMM. MASSELLI: I have none, Mr. Chairman.

CHM. BUTTON: Alright. Who is going to present the petition?

MR. NEWCOMER: Sam Newcomer for the Housing Authority of the City of Middletown, Mr. Chairman and members of the Commission. We respectfully request a special exception for multi-family use for the parcel bounded by Main, William and Broad Streets in Middletown for the purpose of erecting a high rise apartment for public housing for the elderly.

We propose an apartment of one hundred twenty-five units and as you know the Housing Authority together with the Redevelopment Agency has held a design competition. There were six submissions for possible development for the 2.3 acre site and by far and away the best submission was the one submitted by Fusco and Amatruda Company, Gilbert Switzer, architect. I have asked Mr. Switzer to come up and to present his site plan. Mr. Switzer.

MR. SWITZER: Gilbert Switzer, architect for the proposed project. The project as shown on the plan on the opposite wall consists mainly of a high rise apartment which is seen on this uphill portion of the plan. It is oriented in such a way that Broad Street is on the top and Main Street is on the right. Two buildings on the lower portion that are shown are the Mansfield House and the Baptist Church.

The complex consists in addition to the high rise tower of a senior citizens center which is in the northwestern part of the complex and of some low rise two story town house apartments in that portion facing Main Street. The entire site has been developed somewhat as a garden and an attempt has been made to coordinate it with the very beautiful Mansfield Garden which is behind the museum.

Parking for the complex is off Broad Street and camped down slightly. It is expected that thirty-five(35) or thirty-six (36) cars that are there will be fairly well hidden from the houses which are across Broad Street. The parking is also near the senior citizens center. However, as Mr. Newcomer explained, the major portion of parking for the center itself will be directly across the street from the courtyard, which is formed by the three elements of the complex. That's a landscaped courtyard open on one side and access directly from the parking lot so that you will go from the parking lot if your purpose is to go to the senior citizens center, you will go directly across the courtyard to it.

The land as you know drops off at a fairly good incline and we have reserved the portion down lower adjacent to the Mansfield House as a public plaza. The plans that are shown there are not fully developed but they indicate something of the idea of the development of that plaza. I think fundamentally that explains the plan and it is largely efficiency type, some one bedroom and four, two-bedroom units. I would suggest if there are any questions that I will be glad to answer them.

CHM. BUTTON: Does anyone on the Commission have any questions?

COMM. MASSELLI: What is the approximate area for the public plaza on Main Street?

MR. SWITZER: I haven't calculated it but I would judge that it is.. Sam, you are closer to it than I am. What have we got? One hundred by One hundred forty or something like that?

MR. NEWCOMER: Yes.

MR. SWITZER: That is subject to development because we can make that adjusted to fit the needs. At the present time we have shown it in the neighborhood of about One hundred by One hundred fifty (100 x 150) feet of which a good bit will be planted. But it is expected that there will be a fountain there and seats where people could come and eat their lunch or simply use it as a piazza type thing.

CHM. BUTTON: Anyone else wish to speak?

MR. NEWCOMER: Mr. Chairman, if I may. Being so close to these problems I forget the obvious and that is the overwhelming need for housing for the elderly in our town. Project Find has carried out a house to house survey. There are over three thousand (3,000) elderly people in this city many of whom are eligible for public housing and so we are making just a bare start on meeting that need with these one hundred twenty-five (125) units.

CHM. BUTTON: Does anyone else wish to speak on housing for the elderly?

COMM. HIGGINS: I would like to ask Mr. Newcomer a question? In relation to recent publicity on this particular housing Sam, this is a request for Special Exception.

MR. NEWCOMER: Yes.

COMM. HIGGINS: And after the Special Exception is granted a site plan must be produced and check points are set up for a site plan. How can we grant a Special Exception and how can we clear a site plan when you don't particularly have a site plan?

MR. NEWCOMER: I believe that is a site plan.

COMM. HIGGINS: Well now that's a site plan per se, but do you know how many units you are going to have, do you know how high its going to be and the financial situation is such that you don't...now frankly Sam, I want to get this because I don't want to have any roadblocks thrown in the way of this. We only have sixty (60) days in which to handle this.

MR. NEWCOMER: It is a question of chicken and egg in part, Commissioner Higgins. As I am discovering to my great dismay, all construction seems to have nowadays, seems to have severe economic problems. I don't believe these problems are insurmountable. They seem to be normal ulcer producing difficulties that I think we will overcome shortly. I don't believe however, that we can justify as a public agency and as a city, asking a developer to risk his own money in producing finished site plans and finished drawings and answering precisely the questions you raised before we can show him that the project is buildable. I think if we believe that this is a justifiable use, we should so declare now in order to encourage him to continue to develop what I regard as an outstanding building.

One of the..I am sure it is going to be one of the finest public housing buildings anywhere in the country and I would urge that we give him every assurance that we can, jointly as a responsible civic agency, so that he cannot fault us for any delay in any way and that the burden is clearly placed on him to produce what I believe he will produce when we get through with the negotiations.

COMM. HIGGINS: I certainly agree with you on your theory on esthetics etc. as to the beauty etc. of the plan, but the point of the thing is before we can clear this particularly and before a site plan can be prepared, you must specifically have the answers for yourself and for the developer as to what and how many stories, etc. that you are going to have. I hope that you are pursuing this as rapidly as possible.

MR. NEWCOMER: We are and we would be greatly helped if the City of Middletown and your agency could make a determination about the general

height for example of buildings in this area. That would give us guidelines to go by that we could make final determinations in our plan. It would be exceedingly useful Mr. Chairman, if your Commission could make that determination...about height for example, as a guideline and I would hope you could do it in advance of our plans because we wish to be guided by your determination in this regard.

COMM. HIGGINS: Thank you Mr. Newcomer.

CHM. BUTTON: Any further discussion? I declare this hearing closed. Please read the next item, Mr. Secretary.

COMM. MASSELLI: Middletown Commission on the City Plan and Zoning - Public Hearing - January 14, 1970 - 8:05 P.M. - to hear Wesleyan University Development Plans.

I have no correspondence Mr. Chairman.

CHM. BUTTON: Mr. Paton.

MR. PATON: Mr. Chairman, gentlemen, I am John W. Paton, Secretary of Wesleyan University. The Federal Legislation which established Urban Renewal is without doubt the greatest tool ever given American Communities. It enables cities large and small to revitalize themselves and to provide housing for people, particularly their low income people and to bolster the tax base. It does this by making available to them ..to the local community substantial sums of federal money for the purchase and preparation of property to be renewed.

I am going into this preamble to explain why the necessity for this kind of hearing. The percentage of federal funds varies but in general, cities of our size, we receive 75% of the Redevelopment Project costs from the federal government. The state usually picks up one eighth of the cost and the local community picks up the remaining eighth. Obviously the size of the local project is in good part dependent upon the community capacity to pay its one eighth share. Now the law has an especially attractive feature for those communities which have a college or university which is expanding and that feature is this.

Section 112 of the Housing Act says that the money that a University spends to acquire and prepare property in or near a renewal project may be counted toward the local share. Now there are specific geographical limits, time limits and other technical restrictions which I will not trouble you with and the gentlemen here from Redevelopment Agency who can answer those technical questions.

The purpose of this Section 112 is to give the University some bargaining power with the community. Actually the need for that kind of bargaining power is more acute in the larger universities in the urban centers. In a community of our size, we are more conscious of the mutuality of our interests and we don't seem to engage in that kind of bargaining.

In effect what Section 112 does, it enables the University to say to its community we will make available to you credits worth "x" thousands or millions of dollars in return for the opportunity to purchase land in the renewal project. Now if it were not for these credits the city would have to appropriate an equivalent sum of public funds or else forego the federal support. In Middletown's case this would mean that the \$11,800,000 odd dollars that the federal government has put aside would have to be matched by I think it is something like \$1,700,000 in local money.

Well, in our case this provision works out extremely well for two reasons: The first, Wesleyan's expansion happens to fall within the time and the distance boundaries set by law. The coincidence of our growth and the city's growth is to the good luck of both of us. Actually, more than \$2,640,000 in credit is available to Middletown to apply as its share of the cost. The federal law has been liberalized in recent years to say that any excess in these credits not needed in this project may be held over for subsequent annual projects. Well it is obvious that without this 2.6 million dollars, Middletown couldn't possibly undertake a 125 acre renewal project. That is an exceedingly ambitious task for a community of our size.

The second fortunate offshoot of Section 112 at the moment is that Wesleyan doesn't have very much need to purchase very much property within the renewal area. It is not necessary for us to ask the Renewal Agency for the opportunity to buy a great deal of land. Actually, what we are talking about is in the neighborhood of three acres. In fact, as you can see from the letters of Mr. Etherington and Mr. Campbell as submitted to you, the university is on record as being virtually pledged to support renewal whether or not it is allowed to purchase any re-development property or not. I hasten to add this will inconvenience us because we are planning on it.

As I understand it, the purpose of this particular hearing is to enable this commission and the community to view the university's plans in order to determine that these plans and those of the city are compatible. Once that compatibility is determined the city can then claim the \$2,640,000 credits from the federal government when it submits its part II application to the Department of Housing and Urban Renewal. Now to get to the plan itself.

I hope no one is disappointed because there are no surprises for you in the plan. Our needs have been stated publicly for quite some time in various communications with your agency and the other appropriate agencies over the last couple of years and we have been as prompt as our own planning has enabled us to be and as explicit in announcing our proposed solution to these needs. I think the plan can be grouped into three rough categories.

First of all - Buildings & Facilities presently under construction
Two - Buildings in the active planning stages
Three - Projected buildings & facilities

First - Under Construction

The Science Center-you have all seen Middletown's skyscraper here. The Science Center is progressing very well. After some earlier difficulties, strikes, material delays, etc. But God willing we are going to have that ready for partial occupancy by the fall of 1970.

The Hockey Rink at long, long, long last seems to be nearing completion and with luck we all might be skating in it at the end of this month.

The Art Centre and this is not a building but a complex of buildings running to the rear of the High Street building all the way from Willys Avenue to Washington Terrace. I would give you the number of buildings in there but we play games with those numbers and they decrease and go back up with some frequency. As you know we ran into a buzz saw when we submitted this project for bid. The bids came back so high that we were just not capable of going ahead with the project. We are now re-studying it and trying to come up with a new way of approaching it. Our hope is that dirt will fly this spring and we still are intent with going ahead this spring but we may have to come up with different means of financing it. It is going to be a very costly operation no matter how we do it. At this moment, it is not safe for me to predict a completion date because we may have to face a construction.

And those are the three elements of our first category of buildings in construction and those already committed. I can pause at any moment and answer questions on any section or go right ahead on through it if you wish.

CHM. BUTTON: Go ahead on through it, Jack.

MR. PATON: The second group - buildings in the active planning and design stage. The first of these is the Student Center. This is on the corner of High Street and William Street on a parking lot which we have been using for several years and it requires the acquisition of two pieces of property, one of which we have already acquired and the other which we are presently negotiating for.

This building is so long overdue that when I started at Wesleyan fresh out of the army in 1946 as a freshman, I was told that we were going to have a student center and every year since then, people have been looking for it. This will be a multi-purpose building which will bring together the college store, the post office, radio broadcasting facilities and offices for the publication, student government, and the usual thing. We hope it won't be a usual building. We put a very fine architect to work on it - James Polchek, and we think that this will be a superb addition both to our campus and to the community at large.

The second planned facility is graduate and married student housing. This as you will recognize is in the renewal area and this is on the Goodyear site. We are presently working with the Housing Authority and the Redevelopment Agency to try to come up with something that is new and different in the United States.

We..or at least we have not been able to find any predecessor to it. It is a gamble and may turn out to be a colossal mistake in the long run but we think it is a social experiment worth trying. What we public hope to do is to blend university housing with low and middle income housing on a common site. We would hope that this would be integrated in every sense of the term which is architecturally, structurally, racially, socially and economically.

We have some problems to be worked out. Some very difficult problems to work out and do the agencies involved. And we've been in extensive discussion with both. Our problem here is to figure out how to finance it again. Obviously this kind of a thing has to be helped with federal financing and the kinds of financing a college can get are quite different from those that public agencies can get and we just don't know which laws we can work this out under.

We have retained an architect and a legal and financial consultant who are at work now and we would hope that we can get some very definite plans on this to submit to the appropriate agency in the near future. This we are very excited about. We think if we can bring this off, we may be doing something that may set a pattern for other college communities. The criticism of colleges and universities over the years has been that they have walled off their community particularly the low income people in the community. We think the time has come when perhaps we ought to be bringing these together. Ten years from now we may be moaning and groaning about it because it didn't work out the way we hoped it will, but we think its worth a try.

The next large unit that we are actively planning at the moment is student housing. As you know we made the decision to go co-ed. We will have seven hundred fifty (750) girls here by 1976. The first one hundred freshman girls arrive here next fall. Our total number of under graduates by 1976 will be nineteen hundred (1900) and there may be as many as three hundred (300) graduate students. Obviously we need dormitories.

We built the Lawn Avenue dorm having in mind - the Lawn Avenue complex here - having in mind that we own the property across the street and might eventually tie that in. Our present hope is to place one hundred fifty (150) units of housing in the Lawn Avenue area, specific siting still remains to be developed. But it is in this area. They would tie in as an integral part of this Lawn Avenue complex.

The next area for housing of students on the Pearl-Court Street site opposite the High School. As you see from the map and as you all know from personal observations we have a good bit of open land in here behind the Honors College, the center for advanced study. We hope to put two groups of units there. Two one hundred fifty (150) unit dorm complexes. I am shying away from the term "dormitory" because that's become a dirty word on college campuses. Student housing patterns are changing rapidly and the old conventional dorm is no longer in. We are shying away from dormitories except us who are too old fashioned to change our vocabulary.

We are thinking of one hundred fifty (150) units back in and then another one hundred fifty (150) units on Pearl Street itself, towards the High School. If in the future the High School property - not the high school - but if the high school property becomes available when the new high school is constructed, we would certainly be interested in trying to acquire that from the city and we would hope to put another one hundred fifty (150) unit building there. Making a total of four hundred fifty (450) in this general Court Street - Pearl Street area.

The next category is dining halls. If we add this many students we clearly have to feed them. We have been very happy with McConaughy Hall and its been a highly successful building. If we were doing it again we would do certain things differently but we are pleased with it. We wish we had a couple of more McConaughy Halls. We had the foresight that when we built the Lawn Avenue Dormitory to build in the basic structure to build in a basic structure for a dining hall there. And all we need to do now is to peel away that top surface and build onto it. And after we get this new housing in here, our hope is to go ahead with a dining hall here. Whether it will architecturally resemble McConaughy Hall we don't know, but we hope it it as successful.

Similarly with the Court Street area - If we do reach the number of four hundred fifty (450) units there, we will clearly need a dining room. We would like to put it right in that complex somewhere. So our planning as we go ahead and proceed with this, if we are able to, our planning will embrace a dining hall as well.

The next unit is parking facility - over here on Vine Street, south of the tennis courts. We already have a parking lot there and it hold I think about two hundred fifty (250) cars. We are hoping to add probably twice as many cars to that in a multi-level structure and we have an architect considering that problem now. How many levels that will be, whether it or any of it will be underground, how much would be above ground, remains to be determined. We've discovered that going below ground for parking lots gets fearfully expensive and we just don't know yet how it will shape up but obviously we would have to be back to you gentlemen for permission to go ahead with any of it. But our present thinking is that we would like a lot there that would hold somewhere in the neighborhood of five hundred fifty (550) to five hundred seventy-five (575) cars. Obviously then this lot would service the hockey rink, the Science Center, and the Foss Hill complex.

We are not trying to make any pretense that we are solving the parking problem by no means. If we did solve it, we would be the first institution in America that did. Parking seems to elude human solution.

The third category is projective and here of course we have to be considerably less specific. We know what our needs are. We need a library. This sounds funny and it has taken a lot of swallowing on the part of a good many of us to think that Olin Library, which is probably as fine a college library in the country, is not sufficient. But the fact is that Wesleyan has become as its name always was a small university and we clearly need a university research library. The problem is here that we just don't know where technology has brought us to at this stage of the game. We don't know whether the old fashioned barn for the storage of books is any longer appropriate. If we build now we are building for one hundred years or more and we don't want to build something and have it be a white elephant the minute it is constructed.

We know that technology at this moment is capable of instant information retrieval. You can find anything that is in any book in any library in the world by electronic devices if you are ready to pay for them. The problem is that the technology is there but nobody has mass produced it so that anybody can afford it. So we just don't know how fast to proceed. We've been exploring this with consultants including the librarian at Yale and Princeton. We think we are ready now to have an architect sit in with us and think it through. We have no illusions about how rapidly we can move here. We want an architect to think through the problem with us and then we can proceed.

One thing specifically that we can tell you about the library is that it is certainly going to go on the campus. We're not going off the campus with it. It must be absolutely central more than any other facility. So that is a neat little problem and if any of you gentlemen have any recommendations as to where the dickens we can squeeze it, we'd like to know.

And actually the buildings and grounds service facility as you know, we acquired the old Mohawk Plant on Hamlin Street some years ago and that has been very useful to us but we've outgrown it and in addition, the Redevelopment Agency wants to get it out of there. So we are looking for another place for that.

Third as we add numbers we clearly have to add faculty and this means that we need a new academic building. A new classroom building. A building which will also have faculty offices. We don't know where that will go. We don't know the size of it. We don't know the interior composition of it. All we know is that we are going to need it and it is going to come very fast and we ought to be working on it now. That too like the library is going to have to be central, so it is going to be on the main campus somewhere.

The fourth and fifth areas are somewhat more complex and difficult for us period. We think that the Hockey Rink can make a center around which we can build a total athletic complex. There is only one problem. We don't own the property. We have no way of acquiring it except through the open market. We've been very straight forward with the people in this neighborhood. We've made no bones about the fact that we are interested in buying that property when and as it comes on the market. When we decided to go ahead with the hockey rink there, we met with all the neighborhood and we explained that what we were doing. We said as we looked down the road we hoped that someday this would be the center of a total athletic complex.

When Wesleyan built the present gymnasium it was a wonderful thing and that lasted for quite a while. But I think we outgrew it around 1940 and certainly since we've added women, we've outgrown it for other reasons than just numbers. We definitely need a new swimming pool and a new gymnasium. We've bitten into our athletic fields to the pint now where we are getting desperate. As we build this Art Centre here, we will encroach further on north there and that will really make the situation critical. Our hope is that if we can acquire a substantial amount of this area over the next few years we can put a total athletic complex in there.

I think I can stop there except to say that I will be glad to talk from any of these other maps. (pointing to several other maps on the wall) This red indicates the area that we are talking about. It starts at Pine Street and goes all the way over to Knowles. It butts up against Long Lane here and here. These turquoise colors show properties that we would hope to acquire over the long haul but it would be acquired for faculty housing. It would remain tax paying homes within the area.

With that I think I will stop and be happy to try to answer any questions you may have.

CHM. BUTTON: Does anyone have questions on it?

COMM. MASSELLI: It would have been very nice if you would put McConaughy Hall on top of Science Center. You would really have something!

MR. PATON: I like the idea. That might be a good place to put a dining hall.

CHM. BUTTON: Does anyone else wish to speak on this particular petition? Alright, I hereby declare that hearing closed and ask the Secretary to read the agenda for the next one.

COMM. MASSELLI: The Middletown Commission on the City Plan and Zoning - Public Hearing - January 14, 1970 - time 8:25 P.M. - to consider a proposed amendment to the Zoning Code controlling maximum building heights in B-3, Central Business Zone.

I have no other further correspondence, Mr. Chairman.

CHM. BUTTON: Alright. Certainly Middletown is in the midst of exciting development. It is coming of age so I think that we have to open our vistas a little bit and in this context that the Commission has drafted a new change in the zoning requirements in the B-3 Central Business District insofar as the coverage of lot and height the building can be and I will ask Mr. Reif our Planning Director to explain this particular text amendment.

MR. REIF: I will start the explanation by reading the proposed text amendment to the Zoning of the City of Middletown. "If adopted by the Commission, this amendment would change the wording of certain requirements of the B-3 Central Business Zone under Section 33 of the Zoning Code."

Within Section 33, paragraph 33.02, maximum height would read - "the maximum height shall not exceed twenty stories." Paragraph 33.03 controlling minimum lot area, width and yard requirements would read; for permitted uses - net lot area, no minimum requirement, lot width no minimum requirement, front yard ten feet, and side yard ten feet, rear yard fifteen feet. These minimum yard requirements shall be increased as required by the lot coverage provision."

Paragraph 33.04 which controls lot coverage would read - "in addition to minimum yard requirements, the setback sum of the yards or at least one yard shall be increased one foot for each ten feet of structure height. Permitted uses which includes dwelling units shall provide two hundred fifty (250) square feet of usable open space per dwelling unit."

So ends the proposed text change. One of the reasons for this proposed amendment is the fact that currently the B-1, B-3 and R4 Zones all permit the same height building. That is ten stories maximum. One of the features of a Central Business District usually is an allowance for higher structures. If this proposed text change is adopted, it is likely that it will encourage renewers to develop more office space in the downtown area.

CHM. BUTTON: Can you perhaps give us some insight on different ways the typical square lot could be built on? For what this calls for.

MR. REIF: Well let's see. If a person had a lot and wanted to build a twenty story building he would be required, if he chose to have his maximum setback or all the setback in front, to set it back twenty feet from the front yard, ten feet from the side and fifteen feet from the rear. If he chose to distribute the ten feet additional setback, he could distribute it around on all four sides.

Now one factor you might consider is that right now the code will allow 100% coverage of land for a ten story building. This means that the entire B-3 Section of the city, that is the Central Business District could really be covered by one solid building that was ten feet high. The proposal before you would at least provide a certain amount of open space around each building.

CHM. BUTTON: It is our feeling of course that by going up with the proper setback, we could increase the economic feasibility to permit more of the local space.

MR. REIF: Right. A building where there were dwellers would of course have to have additional open space. The office building would be an example of one that could have the minimum. Of course these are absolute minimums. It is possible for a developer to realize additional open space around the building which is desireable and of course he could provide it.

CHM. BUTTON: Does anyone on the Commission have anything further to add? Does anyone on the floor wish to make comments on this particular amendment?

MR. TIBBETTS: Parking..does parking have anything to do with this. Any ratio to parking?

MR. REIF: No. One of the reasons for that is that it is quite common now to have parking as part of the building. Parking is still a requirement, yes. It can be on the site. It can be off the site or it can be on the surface level or it can be part of the building itself.

MR. TIBBETTS: But you expect them to provide enough space for their own people.

MR. REIF: There is no change in the requirement for parking in this proposed change. It would still be necessary to have a certain amount of parking for each use. This setback would be in addition to any open space provided for surface parking.

CHM. BUTTON: Yes sir.

MR. STONE: I am correct am I not in assuming that your comments on your proposal concerning the setbacks and all pertains only to the Business District?

MR. REIF: Yes, the B-3 Central Business Zone. Right.

CHM. BUTTON: I beg your pardon, that was Mr. Stone. We are supposed to identify ourselves for the record.

MR. STONE: I am Charles Stone.

Public Hearing
January 14, 1970
Page 20

CHM. BUTTON: Does anyone else have anything else to say on this amendment? If not I declare this hearing closed.

The hearing closed at 8:32 P.M.

Respectfully submitted:

P. Hutton

P. Hutton
Recording Secretary

Edward F. Button (4)

Edward F. Button
Chairman