
**CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

16-Jan-01

Present

S. ENGLEHARDT, VICE-CHAIR
V. AMATO
M. DIMON
R. BANTUM
H. HENRY
A. KELLEY
A. MARINO
D. MITKOSKI
E. ROBERTS
J. ROBINSON
L. WALLACE, CHAIR

Absent

B. PLUM
R. BUTLER
E. BOGDAN
T. REED

Also Present

M. JOHNSON
T. ANASTASIO
T. GOMES

S. Englehardt called the meeting to order at 5:06PM.

Upon a motion by V. Amato, seconded by J. Robinson, minutes of the December meeting were approved.

The Housing and Demographics chapters of the Plan of Conservation and Development were approved by the committee per a motion at the December meeting that they be approved conditioned upon inclusion of any feedback between the two meetings. M. Johnson reported that there had been no feedback in the intervening month.

M. Johnson reported to the committee that there was still \$66,000 available in the pool of funds identified last fall, after allocations for streetlights, courthouse demolition, and down payment assistance funding. S. Englehardt asked for a more thorough financial report. M. Johnson replied that he had only looked into idle funds potentially available for reprogramming. The committee requested that hereafter, M. Johnson provide full financial reports on a bimonthly basis. M. Johnson reported on those projects with idle funds. J. Robinson advised M. Johnson to look into the Shiloh Baptist proposal as he recalled that it had been a loan, and that the project was done; any balance should be free and available for reprogramming. A. Marino said he thought the Amazing Grace project had finally identified a viable site and would soon be using their money. V. Amato inquired if subrecipients were not obligated to spend down their balances to a certain level on a regular balance. M. Johnson said that only the entitlement community as a whole was.

The committee then discussed the timing of the proposals. Questions arose about why should -- and whether the committee in fact could -- act now on the two proposals, when the regular funding round was only a month away. M. Johnson explained that, as the funds were reprogramming funds they could be spent anytime. A. Marino added that entitlement funds are disbursed to Middletown at a certain time each year, thereby dictating the timing that Middletown could disburse them to subrecipients, whereas reprogramming funds were different. M. Johnson noted also, since the proposals were under \$50,000, they constituted only a "minor" amendment to the Consolidated Plan and did not require the same public participation processes that a "major" amendment would.

M. Johnson then introduced two spending initiatives from the Mayor's office, explaining that both were HUD-eligible and seemingly worthy proposals. He then introduced T. Anastasio, of Middletown Youth Center, and T. Gomes of the Mayor's Office who presented the proposals.

First, T. Gomes and T. Anastasio presented the Mayor's proposal for job counseling at the Middletown Youth Center. H. Henry inquired about the hours of operation. T. Anastasio replied the Center was open Monday through Saturday, 3~7PM on weekdays, 12~5PM on Saturdays. H. Henry followed up with a question about the geographic location of the target clientele to be served. T. Anastasio said they were mostly residents of Middletown public housing. E. Roberts inquired into the different duties of the two positions to be funded. T. Anastasio summarized the different duties. L. Wallace inquired into existing funding sources of T. Anastasio's salary and how existing funding would be distributed if CDBG monies were used to offset some of the salary. T. Gomes and T. Anastasio responded and summarized other programs at the center that would benefit from funding freed by new salary funding. R. Bantum inquired about youth at the center that were dropouts: did the youth center counsel them back into school? T. Anastasio replied that for some, that was not an option, but that he counseled them into GED programs. R. Bantum inquired how many of the youth, and how many of the staff were African-American. T. Anastasio replied both groups were 95% African-American. E. Roberts inquired what the program's success rate was. T. Anastasio replied about 55%.

Next, T. Gomes presented the Mayor's proposal for improvements to the Old Washington Street Burial Ground, discussing the site's history and connection to the Heritage Trail initiative. E. Roberts inquired into the current caretaking of the cemetery. T. Gomes responded that Charlie Baldwin is its caretaker; his salary is paid for through the city's cemetery allocation. S. Englehardt inquired why isn't Wesleyan involved with paying for its upkeep. T. Gomes explained that, by law, abandoned cemetery's are the municipality's responsibility. E. Roberts inquired why couldn't one of Middletown's trade schools be tapped to work on the fence; this would save money and get the community involved in what is a essentially a community asset. V. Amato inquired into the site's historical status. T. Gomes responded that both the cemetery and the gate's pillars are historical. The site is designated historic by the Middlesex County Historical Society. V. Amato stated that he thought getting Vinyl or some other trade school involved was a good idea. J. Robinson said it was not within the CAC's scope to edit, abridge, or stipulate a project's scope; the CAC simply reviews applications, judges the project's merit and eligibility, and determines an allocation amount. The CAC could, however, approve a funding amount and state its wishes that the involvement of the schools be part of the project.

A. Marino moved that the projects both be approved as they were consistent with HUD guidelines, city goals, and decreased the local tax burden. H. Henry seconded the motion, noting that vendors and how the project was implemented was all contingent on funding availability anyway. The sense of the committee was that they did not want to take action on both proposals at once. A. Marino moved to separate his former motion into the two proposals. H. Henry again seconded.

L. Wallace inquired into the urgency of the proposals. J. Robinson stated that they had both been long in coming and required expedient action. T. Gomes expanded, saying that the Mayor would soon be opening the Heritage Trail and would like to be able to announce the imminent burial ground site improvements. Members of the committee were skeptical about the projects' urgency. V. Amato moved to table the Jobs Center proposal until the next meeting when members had had a chance to read the application and consider it more fully. E. Roberts seconded. A vote was taken. Voting in favor of the motion were: V. Amato, L. Wallace, D. Mitkoski, M. Dimon, S. Englehardt, E. Roberts. Voting against the motion were: R. Bantum, H. Henry, and A. Marino. J. Robinson abstained.

S. Englehardt noted that the Burial Ground proposal as yet did not have an application. T. Gomes responded that she had only received the material today but would have it synthesized soon. V. Amato then moved to table the Burial Ground proposal until the next meeting. E. Roberts seconded. A vote was taken. Voting in favor of the motion were: V. Amato, R. Roberts, S. Englehardt, M. Dimon, D. Mitkoski, L. Wallace. Voting against the motion were: J. Robinson, A. Marino, R. Bantum, and H. Henry.

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M. Johnson reported that the Supportive Housing Coalition was gearing up for its homeless count project. The number of homeless in Middletown is part of the formula and reporting requirements for the city's CDBG entitlement. He asked if anyone on the CAC might like to participate, and/or if the CAC wished him to participate as the data gathered was germane to the CDBG program. The committee asked M. Johnson to participate.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by V. Amato, seconded by L. Wallace.

Respectfully submitted,

Munro W. Johnson
Community Development Specialist