

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

JANUARY 17, 1996

PRESENT

L. Cavanaugh, Chair
D. Kelly
C. Chisem
V. Amato
S. Englehart
I. Howell
D. Mitkoski
J. Robinson
S. Shapiro

ABSENT

L. Wallace
R. Hyman
S. Meyer

ALSO PRESENT

B. Arcaro
B. Andrew-Berry
D. Audette
P. Cacciola
Su. Allison
St. Allison
D. Brown
Atty. W. Howard
M. Pearson
J. Mills
K. Mwangi
A. Fonda
J. Basinger
D. Houston
A. Scotti
L. Bowers
C. Wilcox
W. Kuehn
15 members of the public

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- A. Chair L. Cavanaugh called the meeting to order at 5:11 p.m. in the Council Chamber of the Municipal Building.
- B. Public Session:
L. Cavanaugh advised those present of a legal opinion received at 4:07 p.m. from City Attorney T. Solecki advising that the \$125,000 allocation to the Community Health Center and the \$20,000 allocation to Nehemiah should not be part of the reprogramming hearing and the reaching of that money would be at the sole discretion of the Common Council. Therefore, L. Cavanaugh said, only \$19,000+ was available for reprogramming and the public hearing would proceed on that basis.
- B. Arcaro of Nutmeg Big Brothers/Big Sisters said the organization as founded by Bernie Fields is a charity for low income families having a history of violence and/or substance abuse. The requested funds would be used to serve ten (10) additional persons from Long River Village and Traverse Square. S. Shapiro asked about funding for staff. B. Arcaro said that the funds would be used to offset 80% of the case manager's salary; there is also a part-time program person.

B. Andrew-Berry, of MARC Community Resources, plus board members D. Audette and P. Cacciola said the organization has a \$300,000 grant from the Department of Social Services; however, they need supplemental funds. D. Audette said they will lose the State funds if not used. V. Amato asked: is the program area wide (yes it is); other towns supporting this initiative, (no they are not); and is the site in Middletown (yes). Those presenting the request said that most towns provide no access to other monies. P. Cacciola said they have two or three Middletown sites being considered with buildings in the \$300,000 range. Rehabilitation monies would be an additional cost, has completed a feasibility study for a capital drive. J. Robinson asked about the timing of the \$300,000 grant. B. Andrew-Berry said they must show progress in order to not lose the funds.

Mr. and Mrs. Allison representing North End Arts Rising, Inc. request for funds to provide a "bridge" between the present time and April and May when other CDBG funds could be requested. St. Allison read from a portion of the funding request. S. Shapiro asked if he had talked with M. Masselli of the Community Health Center. (no). S. Shapiro asked if he had inquired of the Armory Project. St. Allison said he had spoken with G. Weitzman. V. Amato asked if there was legal obligation for the Community Health Ctr. to accommodate NEAR. Su. Allison said her last conversation with M. Masselli was not pleasant. S. Shapiro suggested that there is a constructual obligation to accommodate the Buttonwood Tree. Su. Allison read a lengthy letter into the record. S. Englehart asked for an expanded legal opinion to answer the question of a dual applicant and grant recipient. L. Cavanaugh said it would be addressed the next day.

D. Brown, representing Nehemiah Housing requested an additional \$15,000 to be applied toward rehabilitation costs for property on Liberty Street. He said that \$50,000 is available from FDIC for property acquisition. The property needs to be made lead safe, and affordable and suitable housing for tenants. L. Cavanaugh asked if there was any prior rehabilitation work on this property. D. Brown reported some work years ago but the windows were never touched, the kitchen and roof need work; and, the furnace is in minimal working condition. J. Robinson asked if Nehemiah Housing is a Middletown Agency (yes). He then asked about 241 Court Street. D. Brown said the total environmental remediation costs were more than anticipated and asbestos is involved. J. Robinson asked what happened to the acquisition money for 241 Court Street. D. Brown replied that applications had been submitted for new acquisition money and additional CDBG funding will be used to leverage other sources of grants.

Atty. W. Howard representing the Community Health Center said he "will pass."

M. Pearson representing Christmas in April said their clients are 90% elderly of which 70% are elderly women. They deal with dire hardship cases. Last year Christmas in April rehabbed four (4) homes. This year over 30 requests have been received. An average of \$3,000 per house is required for supplies. Thus far Christmas in April has raised only \$15,000

but the need is much greater. Christmas in April adds \$8,000 to \$10,000 in value per house in a single day. S. Shapiro asked about matching grants from industries and businesses. M. Pearson responded that is the next logical step for the organization.

J. Mills, a youth counselor at the Buttonwood Tree, cited the need for new space for North End Arts Rising. K. Mwanga a producer of concerts, including several at the Buttonwood Tree, and a performer cited the continuing community involvement of the Buttonwood Tree and its value as an institution. A. Fonda who runs a small business in the North End, encouraged the support of the Buttonwood Tree as a part of the community and cited its contributions in becoming a sense of the community. J. Basinger, a retired faculty member from the community college system noted the poetry circuit and the desire to bring the 1997 nationwide competition to Middletown. D. Houston, a performer at the Buttonwood Tree and has taught workshops at the facility, read a letter in support of its activities. A. Scotti, responding to a comment by S. Shapiro, supported the Buttonwood Tree and its positive impact in the community; she asked that the Buttonwood Tree be allowed to survive.

L. Bowers, representing the Urban Forestry Commission, said funds are needed for the continuing work of City Forester B. Spaman the AIC clients to work in urban forestry management. The funds would be used to provide additional hours for Mr. Spaman.

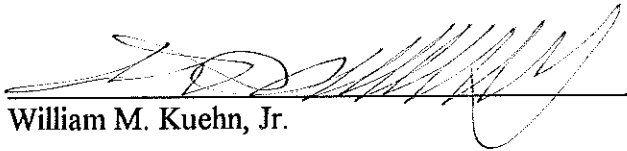
C. Wilcox, representing the application from the Mayor's Office for relocation fund assistance, said the City needs to occasionally condemn buildings. While the Health Department has helped, T. Gomes and A. Ward will take over the relocation project. The City has an obligation to provide relocation funds. V. Amato asked why this activity was not being handled through the Housing Authority which deals in all phases of housing problems.

There being no further comment, the public hearing portion of the meeting was closed.

- C. Upon a motion by V. Amato, seconded by S. Shapiro the minutes of December 27, 1995 were unanimously approved.
- D. There were no project status reports.
- E. There were no reports of committees or correspondence.
- F. Old business:
S. Englehart moved, seconded by V. Amato, that the City Attorney be contacted and urged to respond to the need for a decision concerning the legal obligation of accommodating North End Arts Rising in the \$125,000 grant to the Community Health Center. All voted in favor of the motion except J. Robinson who abstained.

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- G. The Committee discussed the need to meet again to discuss proposals. S. Englehart suggested a workshop setting. It was agreed that the Committee would meet again on Wednesday, January 31, 1996 at 5:00 p.m.
- H. There were no other matters to come before the Committee.
- I. There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.



William M. Kuehn, Jr.

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