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**CITY OF MIDDLETOWN  
DESIGN REVIEW & PRESERVATION BOARD**

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**MINUTES**

*14-Feb-01*

**Present**

J. BIANCO, CHAIRMAN  
D. BROWN (LEFT AT 6:30PM)  
J. FORTUNA  
B. KRONENBERGER  
B. PLUMLEY  
J. ROSENTHAL  
N. STAMLER

**Absent**

P. EVANS  
N. GOFF

**Also Present**

M. JOHNSON  
J. CARNAVALE  
M. VANESKI  
G. CLARK  
P. MARZELLA  
J. LANG  
C. JOHNSON  
T. CONCANNON  
C. DUNCAN

The meeting began with a Public Hearing at 5:05 PM in the Hubbard room at the Russell Library.

First, M. Johnson introduced representatives from Connecticut Light and Power, and antique streetlight manufacturers' representatives from Hadco, Holophane, and Sternberg, and then gave a presentation on choosing streetlights, providing the board and the public with background information on selection criteria, including styles, materials, and historical precedent. Next, the floor was opened to questions and commentary from the public.

The first question related to light pollution and whether the observatory and its activities would be negatively affected by the new lights. J. Bianco responded that J. Rosenthal could contact the observatory to obtain their input. J. Rosenthal agreed.

The next question related to pole heights and whether there was room for variation, particularly for streets and neighborhoods apart from Main Street. M. Johnson responded that there was a broad array of pole styles and heights available from any of the attending manufacturers.

The next question related to amenities for the poles that would enable planters and an automatic watering system for the planters. G. Clark (a representative from Sternberg Manufacturing) responded that such features are available.

Next, J. Lang, of Hadco Manufacturing, commented that the Board should avail themselves of the significant amount of work that CL&P had already completed in studying the streetlight initiative, and that globe-style fixtures were perhaps out of step with that study.

Next a question was posed re: the process of selection and where in the process the current hearing fell.

J. Bianco responded that, while the Board realized that decisions on things such as streetlights would ideally take place in the context of an overall streetscape plan, the timing of the streetlight initiative had come to the board of its own volition and that the Board was glad of the opportunity to review the issue before any decision was finalized.

Next ensued several public requests for pole amenities. C. Duncan, of the Chamber of Commerce, commented that the chamber had been moving forward with plans for Christmas wreaths based on designs

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shown them previously. T. Concannon, also spoke in favor of pole amenities enabling planters. C. Duncan expressed a strong interest in having outlets available on the poles.

Members of the public in attendance, representing the Main Street Middletown Design Subcommittee voiced a preference for pendant-style poles with planters, no banners, and fixture heights at 12-13 feet above ground.

P. Marzalla commented that, given the spacing constraints of the project, 12-13 foot heights would be inadequate to illuminate the street properly.

J. Bianco commented that a scaled, section drawing of the street with the proposed lighting poles and fixtures would be useful to evaluate the issue more scientifically.

C. Johnson commented that, in general, the issue needed more study and more public opinion.

J. Bianco commented that, ideally, more lights at lower heights was preferable to less lights at higher heights. Perhaps a scaled drawing or photograph using Adobe Photoshop software to more closely evaluate the visual impacts would help.

D. Brown commented that he preferred the pendant style lamp hanging from a bracket but asked if the city was necessarily restricted to choosing among options with representation in Middletown history.

B. Kronenberger inquired into the existing lighting conditions at the Pilot site.

J. Carnevale of Connecticut Light & Power provided the following information:

Presently, there are approximately 3.89 foot candles of light at the site. The Illuminating Engineering Society of North America recommends 1.7 foot candles. There are 52 existing streetlights. Poles at 12-13 foot heights with 250 Watt lamps would only generate approximately 1.2 foot candles. Present pole heights are 30 feet at 400 Watts.

D. Brown inquired into the reason behind orienting the fixture bracket toward the street versus toward the sidewalk.

J. Lang of Hadco commented that, with 87 foot road widths, the arm orientation towards the street wouldn't make a significant difference in illuminating the sidewalk.

J. Bianco inquired into the possibility of double-headed fixtures.

J. Carnevale suggested that the pole's EPA rating (i.e., strength) must be adequate. The pole must support the fixture(s) and any pole amenities that are chosen.

J. Bianco inquired into potential glare factors if the heights are lowered.

J. Carnevale responded that there was a possibility that glare could be generated.

D. Brown commented that light levels affect safety and the perception of safety. Improving each would lead to more people coming downtown in the evenings.

The issue closed with the Board stating a preference for the pendant-style streetlights presented as "Option A," but added that more time was needed; the decision of what streetlights to apply to Main Street would be better conceived as part of a comprehensive streetscape plan. D. Brown requested that a letter to the mayor be written to this effect.

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Next, members of the North End Action Team Housing Committee presented their plan and preliminary design concepts for the Ferry, Green, and Rapallo Streets area.

J. Rosenthal asked if Riverview Street would be a pedestrian street.

K. Winston replied that it would be a two-way street with sidewalks.

L. Brewster commented that the plan was preliminary and that the Housing Committee was interested in the Board's input.

J. Bianco commented that the Board itself, in part, originated in members' involvement in design issues pertaining to the original North End / CBD Urban Renewal Plan.

C. Rodenhizer said that the Housing Committee was seeking opportunities to actively collaborate with the Board as it developed its designs and plans.

J. Bianco responded that the Design Review and Preservation Board is, literally, a review Board, and cannot generate its own designs for projects, but must rather respond to the designs of private bodies.

C. Rodenhizer responded that the nature of their initiative was a public/private one, and not strictly a private initiative.

J. Bianco offered that one way the Board might be able to help is by hosting a public hearing, much like the one just completed for streetlights.

N. Stamler added that a public hearing could also generate more awareness of the initiative.

Next, B. Plumley inquired into the existence of historic properties in NEAT's project area. NEAT and J. Bianco concurred that there were some, of varying value.

B. Kronenberger added that it can sometimes be difficult to tell which properties have what kind of historic value, as much that is valuable is sometimes beneath the surface.

L. Brewster commented that NEAT is attempting to establish a model in Middletown of mixed-income communities.

J. Bianco said that, with respect to the Board's response to the NEAT Housing Committee's presentation, it would like to see more detail.

M. Johnson added that, in the course of the permitting process, each construction project would come before the Board anyway.

The NEAT Housing Committee presentation then concluded.

Next, the Board considered a sign application from Red Cross. The application drew immediate and unanimous disapproval from the Board. Members all felt that the building's appearance was much better without the proposed sign, that the existing sign above the entrance was adequate, and voted to disapprove the sign proposal. Some members voiced support for a new coat of paint for the building, although such was not a proposal before the Board.

Next, the Board reviewed a proposal from the Department of Public Works (DPW) to repair the stretch of heaving sidewalk on the west side of Main Street, beginning at the College Street intersection. DPW presented two options: Option A and Option B. Option A included brick-patterned stamped concrete for the roadside edge of the sidewalk, filling in the rest with plain concrete; Option B was to be only plain concrete, from curb to storefront. Repeated remarks of appreciation were made for the quality of graphical

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presentation prepared by DPW. The issue and the choice put to the Board by DPW mainly occasioned yet another discussion concerning the urgent need for a comprehensive streetscape plan so that such decisions could be made in the context of the whole street. The Board declined to state an official preference for either of the two options. Substantive issues discussed included the complexity of installation and repair of stamped concrete sidewalks; some work crews might be capable of doing it properly, whereas others might not. Should future alterations be made to the newly installed concrete, how would the junctures be "re-stamped" to preserve a consistent look? If the stamped concrete option were to be used, the Board advocated including an expansion joint. Board members also stated that it was clear that much of the damage to the sidewalk stemmed from a need for bigger tree grates.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Munro W. Johnson  
Community Development Specialist