

## MIDDLETOWN PRESERVATION & DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

MINUTES

FEBRUARY 14, 1996

### PRESENT

J. Bianco, Chair  
B. Kronenberger  
N. Goff  
J. Fortuna  
E. Warner  
D. Brown (5:40)

### ABSENT

A. Tommasi  
J. Dunn  
P. Evans

### ALSO PRESENT

W. Warner, Planning Director  
C. Wilcox, Staff  
B. Bozzi

Chair, J. Bianco called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. in Room B15 of the Municipal Building. He then opened the public forum. B. Bozzi spoke at this session with concern about the convent building being taken down. He noted that the history of the street showed that many buildings had been taken down and he would like to know what the church's position was. J. Bianco replied that this Board has been trying for more than a year and a half to save the building and has found that the only way to do so now is by moving it.

**Minutes:** Upon a motion by J. Fortuna, seconded by E. Warner the minutes of the March, April, and November 1995s meetings were accepted unanimously as written.

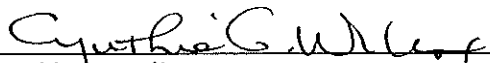
**St. Sebastian's Convent:** The Committee was presented the draft RFP for the moving of the St. Sebastian's Convent; and staff filled them in on the decisions made by the Economic Development Committee regarding costs for the lot and the time frame. There was considerable discussion about "Attachment C" which was a listing of conditions which the church itself was requiring of the developer. These conditions included work and costs which the Committee felt far exceeded the original request of the church, when they asked the Board to try and find a buyer or taker for the convent. Both the Preservation Board and the Preservation Trust had represented to their potential developers that the convent would be free to remove; and that there will be no further responsibility for any expenses on the site. In fact, there had been suggestions made that the church might even contribute the cost of demolition to the developer if they were to take the convent away. This "Attachment C" not only does not offer any monetary incentive to move the building, but it requires the developer to incur considerable cost which might indeed be a "deal breaker". A motion was made by E. Warner, seconded by J. Fortuna and voted unanimously to ask the church to eliminate paragraphs two and three of "Attachment C" as they have presented it.

**Endangered Properties:** C. Wilcox gave a short briefing of the Long Hill Estate/Wadsworth Mansion building project. The Committee was currently in the process of updating cost estimates; was dismayed that there was a considerable amount of new deterioration in the building owing to lack of vents in the plywood which was put on the windows; and was planning to meet soon with the Mayor and Finance Board to come to some mutual agreement as to when a referendum might be and for what amount.

D. Brown mentioned that Paul Fazzino's building on Rapallo Ave. where the Buttonwood Tree had been may be another endangered building. He thought there might be a possibility that the owner would knock this building down and give the area over to parking. Mr. Brown also answered questions about 241 Court Street which Nehemiah Housing and Shelter Corporation is no longer planning to renovate. This building is now back on the endangered properties list and has no prospects for new a ownership or new use.

**New Business :** Bill Warner, Planning Director, addressed the Committee about a logo contest which he thought would be helpful to the historic structure of Middletown's downtown. He spoke about the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program, the Connecticut Main Street Center which is now under the auspices of Northeast Utilities, and proposed National Register listings for both the Arrigoni and possibly the Railroad Bridge. Staff was asked to contact the Historical Commission regarding the possibility of listing these structures. Mr. Warner then went back to some items in his Commission's downtown plan for 2000 and beyond, and noted the items in the implementation plan which had already occurred ... one of which was making the Middletown Preservation Board into a Design Review Board as well. Another item on that list was lighting the Arrigoni Bridge for which he looked for support from the Board. His main request was to have the Board sponsor, or at least be the judges of, a contest for a new image or logo or slogan which would represent Middletown in the 1990s... with a special interest in the historic fabric of downtown. Mr. Warner and the Committee discussed the possible parameters of this contest, and it was agreed that the Board would serve as the judge of the contest, that staff would develop a one page application, and that there will be various categories of applicants ranging from professional designers and college art students all the way down to grade students in the school system. The Board thought that the winner of this contest could receive an award at the same time that the Board did their preservation awards in the middle of May. This timetable seem to fit in well with the college and school schedules. Mr. Warner suggested giving a significant \$500.00 cash award for the winner. The funds would come from his department. After some discussion of this, Mr. Warner and the Board both agreed that design guidelines for the area of the downtown south of Court Street are needed. The Board would start to work on these as soon as they can.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

  
Cynthia G. Wilcox

CGW/sh  
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