

City of Middletown, CT

Economic Development Committee

Parking Advisory Committee

Draft Minutes from the meeting of March 10, 2008

Economic Development Committee: G. Daley, R. Santangelo, H. Kasper, J. Bibisi, D. Bauer

Parking Advisory Committee: M. Saraceno, I. Greenberg, T. Cheeseman, J. Alexander, V. Amato, L. Baldoni, N Zullo

Also Present: N. Patel, W. Warner, R. Kearney, M. Kalita-Leary, J. Phillips, M Stone, T. Davis, B. Cranshaw, C. Johnson, M. Levine

Minutes

A Call to Order: Daley called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM

B Minutes: none

C Communications: none

D Old Business

1) Review of draft report

2) Earmark funds action items

3) Report recommendations: Warner reviewed the list of short, mid and long term recommendations. Stone questioned why the proposed parking garage was not being planned for where the highest demand is at Melilli Plaza. Cranshaw stated the garage does not have to be on the busiest site as long as it was nearby. Discussion of where the garage would be built. Amato asked if the funds could be reprogrammed from transit to parking to create more parking spaces. Patel stated it would be very difficult to do. Cheeseman noted recent information from the federal government states it is very tough to reprogram funds. Alexander asked what projects are eligible for federal funding. Discussion of putting bike lockers in the transit station. Daley stated the conclusions and recommendations of the report need to be presented to FTA. Daley stated the next meeting April 14 would be a dress rehearsal of the presentation to the Common Council workshop in June. Daley asked Patel what the DOT opinion of the study is. Patel stated DOT looks for progress and he sees many good ideas in the recommendations. Warner noted the need to request an extension of the first year of funding.

E New Business

1) Parking Authority Sub Committee Report: Johnson presented the Parking Department Proposal. Daley questioned the contracting of a director and asked if the position could be housed at the DBD. Alexander noted Manchester Special Services District manages Manchester parking. Daley noted the need for accountability and that a tax district could handle revenue and assure that the revenue is used only for parking. Amato stated the former PA did not have all the items mentioned in the State of Connecticut statute

and that the big expenditure decisions were left to the Common Council. Warner stated the Economic Development Fund is an example of fund management and the current PA has \$500,000 in revenues. Daley questioned the reason for a contracted director. Alexander stated a contracted director could be held responsible in case operations went in the wrong direction. Bauer noted the Russell Library is a straight forward operation. Saraceno noted the current PA has a line item within the Police Department which has the teeth for enforcement of fines and questioned whether a new department would cost more. Warner noted how West Hartford has a professional parking manager. Daley noted that parking is not the primary focus of the PD. Baldoni stated an independent department would let them do what they are charged to do allowing for funding rather than funds going into the general fund. Warner noted the Economic Development Fund hold balances and the Common Council decides on expenditures. Levine stated the merchants are looking for the city to act quickly on parking management.

- 2) **Transit Sub Committee Report:** Greenberg presented the Transit Proposal. Cheeseman discussed the proposal to return streetcars on track on Main Street. He stated the project is doable and would allow passengers to hop on and off. Many cities have seen significant economic impact with the addition of streetcars. The operating cost of \$500-600,000 would be supported by DOT 67%, 20% city and fares. The project would not show a profit but the economic benefit would be significant. 80% of the cost is labor & fringe benefits. The project would include 2 cars powered by electricity one of which would be a backup. The streetcar could turn around or reversed on a turntable or have a double engine to go in either direction. Baldoni questioned if the service would begin and end at parking lots. Cheeseman stated the streetcar would have a 10-15 minute headway (wait). Cheeseman is looking into acquiring a replica trolley which would be replaced in time by the streetcar. Alexander noted the transit funds would assist in a parking solution and encourage developers by the permanent tracks along with encouraging tourism. Alexander noted the track could be extended over time to the South Cove development area.

Greenberg discussed the bicycle proposal which would make the city a bike friendly community. The sub committee prioritized the city plan for bike paths and recommended connecting the Westlake bike paths to downtown which would connect a large population with downtown and decrease the demand on parking spaces. Cheeseman noted the potential for a transit link to the bike path system. Additional recommendations include bike racks and other bike amenities. Kalita-Leary discussed improvements to downtown signs, way finding, lot signs and kiosks with maps. Parking lots need enhanced connections to Main Street and need improved appearance. Bike parking needs both long and short term racks along with a bike center with covered bike lockers and showers.

F Other

- G Adjournment:** The committee adjourned at 8:55 PM.