
**CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

19-March-03

Present

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

Absent

M. DIMON

Also Present

M. WACKERS
M. JOHNSON
(NAMES OF
PRESENTERS ARE
IN MINUTES)

L. Wallace called the meeting to order at 4:30PM.

L. Wallace called the first group to present.

The first project was the Medical Transportation Service presented by Brenda Simmons and Kenneth Krollmeyer of the American Red Cross, Middlesex Central Connecticut Chapter. The American Red Cross wants to provide transportation services from Middletown to Hartford and/or New Haven to accommodate low/moderate income elderly/disabled riders who have medical needs. Questions brought up by the board were:

L. Wallace: Why cannot current vans transport patients?

Answer: No we are not buying any new Vans.

L. Wallace: How will you be able to coordinate appointment times with van times?

Answer: Planning is needed, which will be helped by having a committed coordinator.

S. Englehardt: How will this program be funded in following years?

Answer: CDBG money will be sought in the coming years, but the American Red Cross will provide 60% of the cost of the program through in-kind services.

V. Amato: Is this not a duplication of services that other groups already provide?

Answer: Not a service that is affordable. And while other groups have tried, they have not succeeded.

E. Bogdan: Where is the balance of the funds coming from?

Answer: That is the values of the resources being provided by the American Red Cross.

The second project was the Middletown Worker Preparation Program presented by James Lessor, Kevin Marotta, and Dean Wilborn of the Middlesex Business and Industry Foundation. The Middlesex Business and Industry Foundation wants to continue the city program of providing support and helping locate jobs and meaningful employment for out of work residents of Middletown. Questions brought up by the board were:

L. Wallace: How many have been placed in employment to date?

Answer: 45.

A. Marino: What other funds are being sought?

Answer: Federal grants.

L. Wallace: Explain the on the Job training program?

Answer: We cover part of the training and cost in the first few weeks on the job for new employees that need to be trained.

S. Showalter: What other funds are you looking for?

Answer: We are looking for other for others funds.

L. Wallace: CDBG money ideally should be used as “seed money”, and this program has received 11 years of funding?

R. Bantum: (Comment) This is not a Seed program , but a program that the City of Middletown has asked the Middlesex Business and Industry Foundation to administer it.

The third project was the School Readiness presented by Christine Faher and John Hennelly of the Middletown Board of Education. The Middletown Board of Education wants to increase the School Readiness Coordinator position from half-time to full-time to administer the Middletown School Readiness Program, that improves the quality of early childhood programs. Questions brought up by the board were:

L. Wallace: I’m confused by the dates in your application, you are asking for funds for the 2004-2005 school year?

Answer: Yes, we are looking for one additional year of fund and in the future we will be seeking funding from other sources.

E. Roberts: What is the success rate?

Answer: We only have preliminary findings, but they are positive. Children who participate have significant improvements in the early grades.

E. Roberts: Won’t the findings of this program act as a social lesson in the problems that exist in these children’s backgrounds?

Answer: Yes.

J. Robinson: Where is the 2003-2004 funding coming from?

Answer: From a CDBG grant.

S. Englehardt: Will the scope of the program increase?

Answer: It is what we wish, but that is contingent on funding from State and Federal sources.

The fourth project was the Rehabilitation/ Replacement HVAC System presented by Maragaret Rih and Susan Brown of the Oddfellows. Oddfellows wants to replace the HVAC system and replace it with an energy efficient system. The Questions brought up by the board were:

No Questions

The fifth project was the McCarthy Park Rejuvenation presented by Jennifer Saines-Pinch of the Friends of the Village District. Friends of the Village District wants to renovate McCarthy Park in downtown Middletown. Questions brought up by the board were:

L. Wallace: Are you a 501c3(non-profit tax status)?

Answer: No we are trying to get that distinction by that will not be for sometime.

J. Robinson: What streets are these on the map in your application?

Answer: It is essentially bordered by Hotchkiss Street to the east.

B. Plum: Is there not a question about whether or not this is a general government expense?

Answer: It is owned by the city and the Parks and Recs Department has the responsibility to fund this.

R. Bantum: (Comment) This is a round-about way to fund this and it will need to be discussed.

D. Mitkowski: Do you have approval from Wesleyan?

Answer: Yes, we do for the access point to Wesleyan.

The sixth project was the North End Housing Initiative presented by Lucy McMillan of the North End Housing Initiative, LLC. North End Housing Initiative wants to acquire and rehabilitate 4-units of housing for low/moderate income residents in the North End of Middletown. Questions brought up by the board were:

L. Wallace: Who are the five organizations involved?

Answer: The Developers are NEAT, Nehemiah Housing, and the Connection, the homeownership responsibilities are being carried out by Habitat for Humanity, and Alderhouse.

H. Henry: How will they improve the neighborhood?

Answer: They are part of a complete plan to rehab the neighborhood.

S. Showalter: You will have Low/Moderate Income people coming back into the community?

Answer: Yes that is the whole objective.

J. Robinson: How is the sales prices established?

Answer: The price is low because we have "Gap" money from State and Federal sources to make the prices low.

The seventh project was a Property Acquisition presented by Norman Bishop of Positive Solutions. Positive Solutions wants to acquire a property at 14 Alsop Avenue, in order to expand its services and programs. Questions brought up by the board were:

R. Bantum: (Comment) Understand that fund is not available until at least October 2003.

L. Wallace: Where have you received money from in the past?

Answer: We are carrying out a fundraising effort.

The eighth project was the Parents & Children Leadership Training presented by John Hennelly of the Middletown Board of Education. The Middletown Board of Education wants to enable parents to become leading advocates for children through a program that teaches respect validation and belief that when the tools of democracy are understood, the public will actively engage in civic life. Questions brought up by the board were:

S. Showalter: Is this a new aspect or expansion of the program?

Answer: We want to get the Children involved and have them learn what the parents are learning.

A. Roberts: How is the program promoted?

Answer: On tv, in the community, and through literature handed out through community organizations.

J. Robinson: What do you see as future funding?

Answer: We are looking to a number of potential funders, and we expect this to be our last request of CDBG money.

S. Englehardt: How many children are expected, and what are the age groups?

Answer: We have currently 45 children, between the ages of 3-12 that come with their parents and we want to set up to classes, one 5-8 year olds and one for 9-12 year olds.

The ninth project was the Volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate presented by Jaimie Kiefer of the Children In Placement- CT/CASA. The Children In Placement- CT/CASA wants to recruit, train, and supervise court appointed child advocates. Questions brought up by the board were:

L. Wallace: Where is the other funding coming from?

Answer: We receive Judicial funding.

J. Robinson: This is a State program? And is this a regional office?

Answer: This is a regional office that serves children from the cities and towns around Middletown.

S. Englehardt: How are other child advocate programs funded?

Answer: We are not aware what other programs are doing in looking for other funds, but we are looking at private and public monies from corporations and non-profits.

V. Amato: Have you approached neighboring towns for funds?

Answer: No, but we plan to.

L. Wallace noting that it was time for the scheduled dinner break, recessed for 35 minutes until 6:30pm.

L. Wallace reconvened the Public Hearing at 6:30pm and resumed the presentations.

The tenth project was the Facility Improvement presented by Carl Lecce of the Community Health Center. The Community Health Center wants to renovate the entrance area of the Center to help make it more handicapped accessible. Questions brought up by the board were:

B. Plum: How many handicapped people do use the facility?

Answer: We receive about 1-5 handicapped- wheelchair bound patients on a daily basis.

S. Englehardt: Is it a Public Service or Public Facility?

Answer: This is a Public Facility

The eleventh project was the Green Street Arts Center presented by Val Ramos and Peter Patton of Wesleyan University. Wesleyan University wants to fund renovate the Green Street School and make it a cultural and educational resource for the community residents. Questions brought up by the board were:

L. Wallace: How will the facility be utilized and will it be available to others than just the neighborhood residents?

Answer: The business plan is geared as an after-school program and we expect to expand it to a day-long center taking on an number of activities.

S. Showalter: How will the Green Street Arts Center be open when Wesleyan is not open?

Answer: We envision the it to be a year-round institution.

L. Wallace noting that no representative from the Middletown Housing Partnership Trust was present called the next presenter to the floor.

The twelfth project was the Middletown Youth Center, Job center presented by two staff members of the Connection. The Connection wants to provide a job placement program to young people of ages 14-21, where they will receive counseling, training, and other services. Questions brought up by the board were:

S. Englehardt: Is there any change in the program?

Answer: More kids need to be accommodated.

S. Englehardt: What are your plans for securing future potential funding?

Answer: We have applied for other grants and other funding sources.

The thirteenth project was the Russell Library Building Renovation- Phase 3 presented by Arthur Meyers of the Russell Library. The Russell Library wants to continue the improvement of space used for the early literacy programs for children from low/ moderate income families and for general handicapped accessibility. Questions brought up by the board were:

S. Englehardt: Is there priority items you want funded in the application?

Answer: Yes (please see attached handout).

S. Englehardt: The mezzanine, is that a entire new floor?

Answer: Not entirely, it will be a new section in one of our large reading rooms, by taking some of the space above and creating a new section with in the room.

L. Wallace noting that no representative from the Middlesex Community College was present called the next presenter to the floor.

The fourteenth project was the Community Organizer presented by Izzi Greenberg and Peggy Busari of the North End Action Team. The North End Action Team wants to partially fund a community organizer position that focuses upon the education and recruitment of North End residents to participate in programs of the Green Street Arts Center, developing a community-based property management model and, developing an education/workforce Job Bank for North End Residents. Questions brought up by the board were:

S. Englehardt: What is the type of project this falls under?

Answer: in the past this was a Capacity Building project, however the project has evolved beyond that and really fits better under the label of Public Service.

S. Englehardt: What other funding sources are you seeking?

Answer: We are going after other sources of funding, and we are currently applying to two grants. One grants is offered through the Justice Dept, and the other is through the State.

L. Wallace: What has changed in this project?

Answer: We are at a point to really get out there and try to go after some bigger and more challenging projects.

L. Wallace noting that a representative from the Middlesex Community College had arrived requested that presenter to the floor.

The fifteenth project was the CAD Certificate Program presented by Joe Williams of the Middlesex Community College. The Middlesex Community College wants to expand and customize the CAD

Certificate Program currently being offered through Middlesex Community College's Precession Machining institute in Meriden. Questions brought up by the board were:

S. Englehardt: One line-item in your budget is for \$10,000 to carry out recruitment and replacement?

Answer: That line-item exists because it does cost money to advertise the program and many organizations charge or need the incentive in order to get the message out about this program

L. Wallace noting that no representative from the KidCity Museum was present called the next presenter to the floor.

The sixteenth project was the Riverview Street- Road Construction presented by William Warner of the Middletown Planning, Conservation, and Development. The Middletown Planning, Conservation, and Development wants to create a new side street, bisecting the block between Ferry and Green Streets, in order to help carry out the North End Urban Renewal Plan. Questions brought up by the board were:

A. Marino: Will you plant trees?

Answer: yes, we will plant trees like you won't believe.

The seventeenth project was the Neighborhood Rebuilders Fund presented by William Warner of the Middletown Planning, Conservation, and Development. The Middletown Planning, Conservation, and Development wants to provide more funds to help continue the removal of blighted buildings in neighborhoods of low/moderate income people. Questions brought up by the board were:

No Questions

The eighteenth project was the Project Administration presented by William Warner of the Middletown Planning, Conservation, and Development. The Middletown Planning, Conservation, and Development wants funding to provided Middletown with the ability to carry out Middletown's CDBG program, including all HUD reporting, bill-paying, and subgrantee monitoring. Questions brought up by the board were:

J. Robinson: These numbers are in the Mayor's budget?

Answer: Yes

L. Wallace noting that a representative from the KidCity Museum had arrived requested that presenter to the floor.

The nineteenth project was the Create Jobs presented by Jennifer Alexander of KidCity Museum. The KidCity Museum wants to funds to help complete the construction of its expansion, which will lead to the employment of 5 new staff members. Questions brought up by the board were:

S. Englehardt: Is there not something of a conflict between your activity(building) and you objective(create jobs)?

A. Marino: Is there a priority?

L. Wallace noting that a representative from the Middletown Housing Partnership Trust, Inc had arrived requested that presenter to the floor.

The twentieth project was the Military Road Revolving Down-Payment Assistance and Closing Cost Fund presented by Jim O'Rourke of the Middletown Housing Partnership Trust, Inc.. The Middletown Housing Partnership Trust wants to provide down-payment and closing cost assistance to homebuyers buying homes on Military Road. Questions brought up by the board were:

V. Amato: What happens if the houses are sold?

Answer: There are very strict rules for resale, in order to keep them affordable for the next homebuyer.

V. Amato: What is the turnover of these houses?

Answer: The turnover is about 20% and the reasons for that is people either sell there home to buy more expensive homes, are unable keep up with the mortgage, or simply walk away, which was the case with one person.

J. Robinson: (Comment) Some history of the program is that if a house is bought for \$50,000 then it is sold 5 years later and is valued at \$60,000, because there are strict rules in place, the house can only be sold for \$52,000, keeping the house affordable.

E. Bogdan: What bank do you use to run this program?

Answer: It is up to the homeowner who chooses the bank.

L. Wallace reminded the board to get the scorecard to M. Wackers tonight if they are ready, but they must be handed in a week from today.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned, upon a motion by.

Respectfully submitted,

Michiel Wackers
Community Development Specialist