

**CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

March-19-2008

Present

L. Wallace, Chair
A. Marino, Vice Chair
D. Mitkoski
A. Watson
G. Faulkner Jr.
P. Pessina
V. Amato
R. Pelletier

Absent

R. Bantum
E. Noglow
B. Plum
M. Podolin

Also Present

M. Wackers
J. Crescimanno
M. Waldner
P. Cacciola
T. Hardin
E. Figuerai
J. Aster del Valle
T. Carbone
K. Kelly
J. Pugliese
J. Lessor
K. Earles
E. Damota
B. O'Connor
C. Rock
R. Tips
D. Berto
M. Taylor
E. Nocera

Linda Wallace called the meeting to order at 5:00PM and explained to the Committee members and the presenters in the room that the Committee that the applicants for 2008 CDBG funds will have 5 minutes to present and 5 minutes to answer questions from the member of the Committee.

Linda Wallace called for the first presentation, Literacy Volunteers of Central Connecticut's Middletown Community Literacy Tutoring public service program. Darlene Hurtado explained that the Middletown Community Literacy Tutoring Program will provide at least 100 adults with English language tutoring conducted by volunteers who have successfully completed our in-depth tutor-training workshop. The students in this program are low and moderate income Middletown residents who need to acquire/improve English literacy skills (they either read or write below a 5th grade level or they are immigrants with low-level skills) in order to achieve economic self sufficiency and reduce generational poverty through achievements related to work, family, and community involvement goals. CDBG funds will give us the capacity to increase the number of tutors trained and students served by 20%.

Linda Wallace asked if this program operates out of the Library? Darlene Hurtado replied that it uses space at the library, but Literacy Volunteers is an independent organization.

Linda Wallace asked what the fund would be used for? Darlene Hurtado replied that it will be used for salaries, specifically to expand the staff hours by 25 percent.

Vincent Amato asked where will this program take place? Darlene Hurtado replied that it will take place in Middletown with only Middletown residents taking part.

Linda Wallace called for the second presentation, Cross Street Training Center's Cross Street Tutorial public service program. Bettye Graham explained that Cross Street Training & Academic Center Inc. is dedicated to serving students who need additional learning opportunities beyond regular school for experiencing success. We address closing the achievement gap that exists among groups of students by providing one-on-one, pair and share, and small group tutoring and mentoring strategies for underserved populations of diverse cultures. Further, we serve middle and high school students suspended or expelled

from regular school by keeping them focused and academically on task, while addressing anger management and character-building. Further, we extend students additional learning opportunities in the summer through the fine and performing arts. Summer winds Arts and Music Camp is a fun-loving, learning experience made affordable for parents, whose children would not normally be able to afford camp. Conclusively, we serve as a grassroots change agent for keeping students focused through their academic, social, and emotional development, and strengthening their relationships with caring adults and peers. Students from Wesleyan University and Middlesex Community College also benefit from CSTAC, where they serve as tutors and mentors by fulfilling their internships with our children and youth through our programs.

Linda Wallace asked if other funding has been secured? Bettye Graham replied that \$8,000 has been secured from the City's Youth Services, \$5,000 from the Hartford Courant Foundation.

Avery Watson asked how the new location of the program is affecting the client mix? Bettye Graham replied that the location better service a number of Middletown Housing Authority sites.

Phil Pessina asked if the program receives any assistance from the Middletown Board of Education? Bettye Graham replied that the program receives referrals, but no financial assistance.

Linda Wallace called for the third presentation, The Connection Incorporated's Eddy Shelter Security improvement public facility project. Robert Rudewicz explained that the Eddy Shelter provides 24-hour access to emergency shelter for adult females and males over the age of 18. The Connection, Inc. is proposing the installation of additional security cameras to enhance the safety and security of the residents and staff. The additional cameras would allow staff to monitor individuals who may approach the building or attempt to pass contraband through the windows or engage in other activities contrary to the mission of the shelter. This will aid in the prevention of any attempts to smuggle contraband into the facility or engage in other illicit behavior.

Linda Wallace asked if there are any cameras currently installed at the site? Robert Rudewicz replied that there are camera's inside the building, but only one camera outside.

Phil Pessina inquired about the \$10,900 cost of the project? Robert Rudewicz replied that the Connection has received three quotes for the work and the amount requested is based on the lowest quote.

Vincent Amato asked if the shelter benefits Middletown residents. Robert Rudewicz replied that most of the clients of the shelter come from Middletown, but many come from neighboring towns.

Vincent Amato asked if the shelter receives any financial assistance from these towns? Robert Rudewicz replied that Durham and Cromwell have donated an funds, based on numbers of clients that report their town as place of residency.

Anthony Marino asked if other sources of funds are being requested for this project? Robert Rudewicz replied that this project is not seeking other sources for assistance, since other needs at the shelter are being address by other sources.

Julie Crescimanno asked who will be watching the cameras? Robert Rudewicz replied that the cameras will be viewed in the office by staff on a 24 hour basis.

Avery Watson asked what percentage of people do you suspect originate from downtown? Robert Rudewicz replied that they do not maintain statistic in that fashion.

Linda Wallace called on the forth presentation, St. Vincent DePaul's Amazing Grace Food Distribution Initiative public service program. Ronald Krom explained that St. Vincent DePaul Place's Amazing Grace Food Distribution Initiative (Amazing Grace Food Pantry) offers monthly perishable and non-perishable food, free of charge to individuals and families in need who reside in Middletown. We have seen a dramatic increase in the number of new guests who shop monthly at our Amazing Grace Food Pantry. We serve an average of 623 households per month in 2007 which translated to 21,793 food items each month,

or 170,760 meals a year. Our part time Outreach Worker is available to refer individuals to the food stamp program and/or other programs should they qualify, and point out employment opportunities through the local United Labor Agency which offers Vocational services for adults with addiction disorders, or the State Bureau of Rehabilitative Services for people with disabilities and challenges. CDBG funding would be applied to the salary of our 30 hour per week Coordinator who oversees day-to-day stocking and distribution of donated and purchased food; and part of the funding would be applied towards rent for the facility through a twelve-month period.

Linda Wallace asked about how data is collected on clients? Ronald Krom replied that at intake they are screened to see if they are eligible for the service.

Avery Watson asked about what income guideline does the program use? Ronald Krom replied that clients are eligible if their income is 150% of poverty level.

Avery Watson asked what do these families do during the rest of the month if they are only allowed one trip to the food pantry per month? Ronald Krom replied that frequently the food pantry is a way for households to stretch their budget, and it is likely that they make hard choice about buying food versus paying bills.

Grady Faulkner asked why is the Outreach Worker not being funded with CDBG fund this year as it was last year? Ronald Krom replied that the Food Pantry was able to secure other funding with a grant from Habitas.

Grady Faulkner asked why the volume of clients has not increased? Ronald Krom replied that the pantry saw significant increase in usage a few years ago and current that level of demand has leveled out.

Grady Faulkner asked if any other pantries exist in Middletown? Ronald Krom replied that there is another pantry run by the church across from the YMCA on the South Green, but it is on a very limited scale.

Phil Pessina asked about what type of education do you provide families? Ronald Krom replied that the outreach worker provide one-on-one counseling to inform about programs available to households and issues with managing a budget.

Linda Wallace called for the fifth presentation, North End Action Team's Community Organizing public service program. Lydia Brewster explained that the continuing Block by Block community organizing program will focus attention on identifying areas, both geographic and situational, that require indigenous involvement to encourage internal leadership to emerge that provides for sustainable indigenous leadership and prevents factors that lead to neighborhood deterioration. The leadership framework for the program includes residents and stakeholders from throughout the North End, including both longtime residents and newcomers.

Phil Pessina asked how will you use the \$15000 CDBG request? Lydia Brewster replied to maintain our staff to be able to continue the organizing being done in the North End.

Linda Wallace asked who gets the newsletter? Lydia Brewster replied every resident in the North End and those on our mailing list, about 4,000 people.

Grady Faulkner asked when they were going to organize the rest of City? Lydia Brewster replied they NEAT gets more funding, and the activities done in the North End can be replicated throughout the City.

Donna Mitoski asked which streets were chose by the children to adopt? Lydia Brewster replied they choose Ferry Street and Green Street.

Linda Wallace called for the sixth presentation, Easter Seals Goodwill Industries' Community Re-Entry Services public service program. Rachel Tibbs explained that the Community Re-entry program youth and adult ex-offenders in obtaining employment through pre-employment training, job placement assistance, case management and job retention services. Easter Seals Goodwill Industries is requesting \$45,000 in

CDBG funding to support job training and placement services for up to 75 ex-offenders who live in Middletown. Specifically, CDBG funding will support a portion of the salaries to the staff (one full-time Coordinator and one full-time Employment Specialist) who work directly with clientele and a small portion of program supplies.

Phil Pessina asked how many Middletown residents have been through your program? Rachel Tibbs replied eighteen.

Phil Pessina asked how do you track your success? Rachel Tibbs replied that there is a multi-faceted follow-up program.

Phil Pessina asked if the program partners with the Chamber of Commerce or Middletown Adult Education? Rachel Tibbs replied that they currently do not.

Grady Faulkner stated that last year the Committee recommended to fund your program but the Council overturned the recommendation.

Grady Faulkner asked if any clients have found work at your Washington Street Goodwill store? Rachel Tibbs replied that one client has been placed there full-time with benefits.

Grady Faulkner asked how people are recruited into you program? Rachel Tibbs replied the program recruits clients by word-of-mouth.

Antony Marino stated that public service dollars available this year total's \$61,000 and the committee may not be able to give you what you requested or anything at all. Rachel Tibbs replied that the more you can give us the more we can do.

Linda Wallace called for the Committee to review the minutes from the December meeting; Anthony Marino motioned to approve the minutes. Phil Pessina seconded and the Committee approved the motion unanimously.

Motion to approve the December minutes.						
<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>YEA</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Linda Wallace, Chair (Social Service and Housing Relations Seat)			X			
Anthony Marino, Vice Chair (Real Estate Seat)	X		X			
Vincent Amato (Greater Middletown Preservation Trust Seat)			X			
Grady Faulkner (Common Council Seat-DEM)			X			
Donna Mitoski (Handicapped Seat)			X			
Evan Noglow (Middletown Housing Authority Seat)						X
Richard Pelletier (Labor Seat)			X			
Phil Pessina (Common Council Seat-GOP)		X	X			
Barbara Plum (Planning and Zoning Commission Seat)						X
Matthew Podolin (Youth Seat)						X
Avery Watson (Low and Moderate Income Seat)			X			
Vacant (Elderly Seat)						X
Vacant (Minority Seat)						X
Vacancy (Banking and Insurance Seat)						X

Vacancy (At-Large Seat)						X
Julianne Crescimanmo (non-voting Youth Seat)			*			
<u>TALLY</u>			<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>7</u>
Motion Approved						

Linda Wallace called for the seventh presentation, EntrepreneursNow, Incorporated's Entrepreneurial Course for High School Students public service program. Penelope Christy explained this program offers Junior and Senior High School students an opportunity to develop and run their own start business. This grant request is to provide bussing to Hartford for up to 50 Middletown students for nine weeks course. This will be offered twice, April-June 2008 and October-December 2008.

Vincent Amato asked how this program differs from Junior Achievement? Penelope Christy replied that this program provides hands-on experience in creating a real live business.

Linda Wallace asked if this program is restricted to low and moderate income students? No this program is open to all.

Vincent Amato ask if you are successful in getting funding will you be able to conduct this program outside Hartford? Penelope Christy replied that we are looking at Middlesex and New London counties.

Avery Watson asked what other communities participate? Penelope Christy replied East Hartford and Bloomfield.

Avery Watson asked why do you only have urban schools? Penelope Christy replied that the program has not seen interest from suburban comities even though they have been approached.

Linda Wallace called for the eighth presentation, Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation's Shepherd Home Kitchen Facility Improvements public facility project. John Gleason explained that Mercy Housing and Shelter Corporation runs a homeless shelter with 70-beds at 112 Bow Lane in Middletown Connecticut. This request will fund improvements to the kitchen and food preparation area at the shelter by increasing the size of the kitchen from 200 sq.ft. to 400 sq.ft. and bring the electrical, plumbing and equipment up to current health and building code standards.

Linda Wallace called for the ninth presentation, Green Street Arts Center's Afterschool public service Program. Janis Astor DeValle explained that the Green Street Arts Center provides after school programs that provide arts education, homework assistance, healthy snacks and mentoring for children ages 7 through 18. This request will help improve the health and wellness components of the after school program for 66 low and moderate income youth.

Linda Wallace called for a recess to 7:00pm.

Linda Wallace called for the tenth presentation, Community Renewal Team's Head Start and Community Center Driveway Improvement public facility project. George Brusznicki explained that the Community Renew Team's facility at 44 Hamlin Street houses the Idella Howell Child Development Center, Neighborhood Center case management and Meals on Wheels programs. This request is to make improvements to the driveway/parking lot area to increase parking by 20 spaces and improve traffic flow.

The Committee had no questions.

Linda Wallace called for the eleventh presentation, A More Excellent Way Ministries, Incorporated's Youth Connection public service program. Lucille Clegg presented that program.

Linda Wallace asked how participants are recruited? Lucille Clegg replied that they go door-to-door and work with the Middletown Housing Authority.

Avery Watson asked how is your program unique and deserves funding? Lucille Clegg replied that this program treats every child as special and deal with one-youth at a time to provide discipline.

Avery Watson asked if all of you clients are low and moderate income households? Lucille Clegg replied that they only target low and moderate income clients.

Linda Wallace called for the twelfth presentation, Broad Park and Nehemiah Housing's Ferry Green Rapallo Home Ownership Redevelopment housing improvement project. David Berto explained that this project will create 15 units of homeownership opportunities for low and moderate Middletown residents on Ferry Street, Green Street and Rapallo Avenue in the North End of Middletown. This request is to help in the rehabilitation of the properties that will not be demolished.

Anthony Marino asked if the properties are going to rehabilitated or demolished? David Berto replied that it will be a mix of new construction and rehabilitated buildings.

Vincent Amato asked how can we be sure that Middletown residents will take advantage of this? David Berto replied that fair housing laws need to be abided by, which require that these homes be available to any who qualifies, but experience on other projects shows that these will likely be purchased by Middletown residents.

Linda Wallace asked for an overview of the funding for the project? David Berto replied that the city will be contributing \$720,000 of which this \$240,000 request is a part of. State, sales receipts and other funds will likely exceed \$3 million.

Avery Watson asked if it will be difficult for low and moderate income households to afford a low in today's market? David Berto replied that were will screen those for those people that can afford to stay in these homes.

Linda Wallace called for the thirteenth presentation, Middletown Public Schools' Accessibility Enhancements for Youth and Family Services public service program. Elizabeth Nocera explained that this project will make accessibility code upgrades and capital improvements to 310 Hunting Hill Avenue Annex building that houses the Middletown Youth Service Bureau and the Middletown Parent/Family Resource Services

Richard Pelletier asked if this is one of the last inaccessible buildings in the City? Elizabeth Nocera replied that it has never been upgraded.

Linda Wallace called for the fourteenth presentation, I Have A Friend Youth Center Afterschool public service program. Cindy Bartholomew explained that the I Have A Friend Youth Center served inner city children ages 6 to 12 in the greater Middletown area by providing homework assistance, music, art, and computer instruction. The program also offers field trips and provides a hot meal to all participants. This request will help support the program.

Linda Wallace asked where all these activities are provided? Cindy Bartholomew replied at the Center on South Main Street.

Linda Wallace asked what the \$15,000 will be used for? Cindy Bartholomew replied that it pay for part-time director, supplies and food, and administrative and legal costs.

Linda Wallace called for the fifteenth presentation, Kuhn Employment Opportunities, Incorporated's Mobile Work Crew public service program. Joan Shea explained that this project provides disabled and economically disadvantaged individuals with training and employment opportunities while providing the City of Middletown, Parks and Recreation Department with maintenance and beautification services for the City's parks. This project will provide employment to 6 mentally disabled individuals.

Linda Wallace if these are the same people each year? Joan Shea replied that we encourage them to take what they have learned and move to the next step in the program, but clients may decide to stay because they value the opportunity.

Linda Wallace called for the sixteenth presentation, HOPE Incorporated's Home Ownership Providing Empowerment capacity building program. Debra Hopkins explained that HOPE Inc is an organization that tries to increase homeownership for first time buyers. This request is to develop a strategic plan to address affordable housing by researching blighted properties in Middletown that could be targeted for affordable housing redevelopment, prepare preliminary documents for future grant requests.

Linda Wallace asked how the money would be used? Debra Hopkins replied that the funds would be used for administrative and promotional efforts.

Donna Mitoski stated that Wesleyan University should be used for help in conducting research.

Avery Watson asked if the low and moderate income housing is purchased by the recipients or given? Debra Hopkins replied that the homes are purchased.

Linda Wallace called for the seventeenth presentation, New Horizon's Domestic Violence Shelter Front Porch Replacement public facility improvement project. The New Horizon's Domestic Violence Shelter provides a safe place for victims of domestic violence. This proposal is to demolish the existing front porch structure and replace it with a new three-story structure on existing footprint with inside stairway and providing three season living space.

Linda Wallace asked if safety is an issue for the clients with an open air porch? Clients are not placed at the site if they live within five blocks of the shelter; otherwise they are sent to another facility to better protect their whereabouts.

Linda Wallace called for the eighteenth presentation, Shiloh Manor, Incorporated's Shiloh Site Preparation for Affordable Housing Development housing improvement project. Larry Charles explained that Shiloh Manor provides affordable housing to low- and moderate income seniors of Middletown. This request will assist in creating 10 new units of housing, by providing the funding to prepare a two-acre site, by clearing it of trees and debris and conducting the necessary environmental studies. The actual construction of the 10 units will not be done until actual funding is secured.

Vincent Amato asked why does the Church that set up the organization need to lease the land for a fee to the organization it created?

Anthony Marino asked if Zoning and Wetland issues have been investigated to see if this is even possible? Larry Charles replied that they have not been looked at.

Linda Wallace called for the nineteenth presentation, Oddfellows Playhouse's Neighborhood Troupes for At-Risk Youth public service program. Oddfellows Playhouse provides educational theater and drama program through their Neighborhood troops that target children of low and moderate income neighborhoods. Currently there are 5 troupes, 4 from Maplewood Terrace and 1 from the North End. Together they serve 55 low and moderate income children. This request will help support staff salaries and other expenses.

The Committee had no questions.

Linda Wallace called for the twentieth presentation, Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce's Worker Preparation public service program. Jeff Pugilese explained that the worker prep program identifies unemployed low income individuals and works with them to prepare them to re-enter the work-force. The program anticipated that 40 individuals will go through the program with a majority finding employment. This request will help support staff salaries and related expenses.

Linda Wallace asked how many people did you place last year? Jeff Pugilese replied that 70 placements were achieved.

Linda Wallace asked how do you follow-up and track your clients? Jeff Pugilese replied that placement is not the final goal and follow-up is an important part of the program.

Anthony Marino stated that the Committee only has \$61,000 available for public service projects and the Committee may not be able to give your proposal everything that is being requested if anything at all.

Richard Pelletier asked if the Main Street building where the chamber is located is handicap accessible. Jeff Pugilese replied that it is not fully accessible, but the Chamber makes arraignments when needed.

Linda Wallace called for the twenty-first presentation, Shiloh Manor Incorporated's Camp Shiloh public service program. Larry Charles explained that Camp Shiloh is a six-week program to provide up to 70 low and moderate income children, ages 8 to 18, with activities such as arts and crafts, field trips and tutoring support Monday through Friday. This request will salaries, travel costs and related expenses.

Linda Wallace asked how is your program different? Larry Charles replied that they focus on character building and having fun.

Avery Watson commented that she was happy to hear a program that included fun in helping children.

Anthony Marino stated that the Committee only has \$61,000 available for public service projects and the Committee may not be able to give your proposal everything that is being requested if anything at all. Larry Charles replied that fewer children would participate in the program.

Linda Wallace called for the twenty-second presentation, City of Middletown's Down Payment Loan and Closing Costs program. Michiel Wackers explained that the City's Down Payment Program to assist low and moderate income residents in purchasing a home cost the City \$250 per loan and the reserve that had been set up to cover these fees has run out and this is a request to fund 8 new loans over the next year.

Linda Wallace called for the twenty-third presentation, City of Middletown's CDBG Program Administration. Michiel Wackers presented that their project will including all HUD reporting, bill paying, and subgrantee monitoring.

Seeing no more business the Committee the adjourn at 10:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Michiel Wackers, Deputy Director of Planning, Conservation and Development