

**CITY OF MIDDLETOWN  
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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**MINUTES**

*March-28-2007*

**Present**

L. Wallace, Chair  
V. Amato  
D. Mitkoski  
A. Watson  
G. Faulkner Jr.  
D. Bauer  
M. Podolin  
R. Bantum

**Absent**

A. Marino, Vice Chair  
E. Noglow  
B. Plum  
A. Kelly  
R. Pelletier

**Also Present**

M. Wackers  
S. Gaarder  
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 5:15PM.

Linda Wallace called for the first presentation by Amazing Grace Food Distribution Initiative. Terry Carbone and Kathleen Kelly of St. Vincent DePaul presented that their program will offer monthly food free of charge to individuals and families in need who reside in Middletown. It will be open three afternoons a week for food distribution. To create a balance of food distributed in families in need, Amazing Grace can only allow just one visit per month per family. Because of the single monthly visit and limited staffing, people are not being assessed to see if they qualify for other services which may help them make long-term improvements in their lives. The program distributes donated food, and volunteers operate the day-to-day stocking and distribution of food. Program expenses are limited to the salary of one part time (30 hour) coordinator, office and program supplies and utilities and rent for the facility.

David Bauer asked if St. Vincent DePaul of a City of Middletown Grant? They replied that this grant will be able to match the other grants that they receive to pay for all the bills associated with the operation of Amazing Grace.

David Bauer asked a follow-up question to elaborate on the outreach component of the proposal. The presenters replied that the outreach worker would assist in linking clients of Amazing Grace to other available programs such as food stamps.

Avery Watson asked what the salary for the out-reach position will be? They replied that it would be between \$10 and \$15 per hour.

Linda Wallace called for the second presentation for the Old Middletown High School Sidewalk improvement project. Phil Cacciola and Tom Hardin presented that their project will provide an area for vehicles to pull off the street approximately 5 feet, which will provide a safer environment for the tenants at Middletown High School Apartments and keep traffic moving on Court Street. The project also includes adding a handicapped/accessible curb to the entrance ramp of the building. The project in no way affects sidewalk traffic, as the present sidewalks are 10 feet from building line to curb.

David Bauer stated that historically City projects go over budget by 20% and asked if the historic character of the Old Middletown High School will be at all impacted by this project. Phil Cacciola replied that the historic elements of the building will not be adversely impacted.

David Bauer asked if anything from the High Street traffic calming experience would help create a better design for this proposed project. Phil Cacciola replied that this is a very simple design. The Fire Department has reviewed it and likes the ability to get 5 feet closer to the building in cases of emergencies. The Police Department has reviewed the proposal and is concerned about people parking for extended periods, and will require no parking signage.

Ronnie Bantum asked if cars would be able to safely pass while people are loading and unloading from cars and buses? Phil Cacciola replied that this would allow for safer loading and unloading of passengers on Court Street.

Ronnie Bantum followed up by asking will it make it safer for cars and buses equipped with a wheel chair lifts? Phil Cacciola replied that there will be times when vehicles traveling west on Court Street will need to stop and allow a car or bus to unload and load a wheel chair passenger, but overall this proposal creates a safer environment for people and vehicles.

Linda Wallace called for the third presentation for the New Horizon's Front Porch replacements project. Michelle Waldner and Stephen Gaarder presented that the CHC purchased the current property to house the New Horizon's Domestic Violence Shelter after its first location was no longer viable. Making the shelter a desirable and hopeful living space for female victims of domestic violence and their children has driven the renovations to date as well as this renovation. By completely demolishing the existing front porch structure and replacing with new three-story structure on existing footprint with inside stairway and providing three season living space, residents will have a safer, brighter, and more useable space.

Grady Faulkner asked what the average stay of a client was at the New Horizon shelter? Michelle Waldner replied that the average stay was 60 days and that in the past year there have been 63 adults and children who have passed through the shelter.

David Bauer asked elaborate on other City grants that New Horizon's receives from the City. Michelle Waldner replied that the other City grants that are received have been used only to support program services, whereas this request is to improve the facility through structural improvements.

Linda Wallace called on the fourth presentation for the Middletown Worker Preparation Program. Brian O'Connor, Jim Lessor and Jeff Pugliese presented that their program will help find work for unemployed or displaced workers in the city of Middletown. The goal is to put the people of Middletown in the best possible position to secure employment and improve their quality of life. The Chamber job Counselors assess the skills of the clients and determine their strengths and weaknesses. Chamber staff then helps clients create effective resumes and prepare for job interviews while providing job coaching and employment retention training.

Linda Wallace asked if there was a plan in place for future funding for the program? Brian O'Connor replied that they have tried to work with any reductions in the past or try to leverage other programs or resources to provide the service.

Linda Wallace asked who provides funding for the other programs? Brian O'Connor replied that it was the Connecticut Department of Labor. Linda Wallace asked how many people were placed last year? Brian O'Connor replied that roughly 35 people were provided employment out of roughly 60 participants in the program.

David Bauer stated the past funding was not provided in the application.

David Bauer asked what the structure was for the Middlesex Chamber, since it housed a number of non-profits. Brian O'Connor briefly summarized the structure of the Chamber and clarified that the previous

years numbers were 37 out of 58 participants were placed in employment through the program. Brian O'Connor further explained that the City of Middletown asked the Chamber of Commerce to carry out this program and for the past three years the program has received \$9,500 (2006), \$10,000 (2005) and \$10,000 (2004).

Grady Faulkner asked what the selection process was for the program? Jim Lessor replied that it is largely through word of mouth.

Grady Faulkner asked if participants came from all over the City and not just the North End? Jim Lessor replied that participants are from all over the City with a majority in from the downtown area. Most of the participants lack transportation.

Linda Wallace called for the fifth presentation, the Accessible Ramps project for Gilead. Kimberly Earles presented that their project will contract the construction of two handicap accessible ramps. At 681 Saybrook Road, Gilead's Outpatient Clinic offices services for medication management, individual therapy and group therapy. The ramp that is currently in use no longer meets the current code compliance for handicapped ramps. The project proposes the construction of a new ramp, built to code compliance, with a design that safely allows entrance and exit to a walkway. 31 DeJohn Drive is the location of Gield's Social Rehabilitation Center. The project proposes that a ramp be constructed to allow handicap access into the gazebo so that all clients may enjoy it.

Grady Faulkner requested more detail on how a cost of \$14,000 was derived for two ramps? Kimberly Earles replied that it was a guess based on the fact that a similar ramp was done for \$6,000 and since this proposal is for Federal funds, additional costs of federal prevailing wage regulations would increase the cost.

Grady Faulkner asked a follow-up question about the location of the gazebo ramp? Kimberly Earles replied that the ramp would run from the gazebo to the parking lot, and the gazebo may need to relocate the gazebo to allow enough room between end of the ramp and the parking lot.

Avery Watson asked if all the clients are low and moderate income. Kimberly Earles replied that all of the clients are low to very low income with all receiving some type of federal or state entitlement.

Vinnie Amato asked if all the clients were Middletown residents? Kimberly Earles replied that they were all Middletown residents and Gilead has facilities in other towns in order to service residents of those communities.

Linda Wallace called for the sixth presentation, the Mobile Work Crew proposal for Kuhn Employment Opportunities. Joan Shea presented that their project will provide disabled and economically disadvantaged individuals with training and employment opportunities while providing the City of Middletown, Park & Recreation Department, with maintenance and beautification of the city's parks.

Linda Wallace asked how the program dealt with the loss of funding in the past grant year? Joan Shea replied that they operated at a loss.

Linda Wallace asked how many job coaches accompany the group? Joan Shea replied that one coach per crew, unless a specific individual was receiving special training. In that case more than one coach would be working with the crew.

David Bauer asked if this program had a grant from the Board of Health? Joan Shea replied that she was not aware of funding opportunities from the Board of Health.

Joan Shea stated that even a small grant is appreciated and goes a long way in assisting these individuals in the program.

Linda Wallace called for the seventh presentation, the After-School proposal for the Green Street Arts Center. Janis Astor del Valle presented that their project will provide an afternoon haven where

Middletown area children and young adults can explore their creativity and develop practical skills for everyday life. Each weekday afternoon students of After School Program receive a nutritional snack, homework assistance, mentoring and arts enrichment. The program is open to area students between the ages of 7 and 18. Students participate in art activities, recreational arts, free art classes and private vocal and instrumental lessons. Each student is cared by specially trained Green Street staff, teaching artists, community volunteers and Wesleyan students.

Linda Wallace asked if the entire \$20,000 will be used for scholarships? Janis Astor del Valle replied that the \$20,000 will only be used for scholarships.

David Bauer asked how Green Street will seeking funding in the future? Janis Astor del Valle replied that they are actively seeking State funding in addition to funding raising and fees.

Avery Watson asked is most children are from the North End. Eric replied that they are from all over town. Word of mouth passes around. Janis Astor del Valle replied that students come from other parts of Middletown such as Wesleyan Hills.

Linda Wallace called for the eighth presentation, the Job Training proposal for Positive Solutions. Norman Bishop and Cocomo Rock presented that their project will support 20 men and women who are very low income, HIV positive or living with AIDS. The program will teach them basic computer skills so that they can fit into today's job market or move to PSI's data archival program. Participants in the computer training program will learn basic computer skills such as Word and Excel on the six computers in PSI's classroom, as well as fundamentals of scanning and related applications. The introductory classes will run for four weeks. At the end of the four weeks participants may enter the job-market directly or enter PSI's data archiving program. This requires the additional two weeks of training. Program participants will be selected from other PSI programs and area agencies.

Ronnie Bantum asked how do you find people to take part in the program? Cocomo Rock replied that they utilize Oasis, Community health Center, Red Cross, St. Vincent DePaul and other local agencies as sources for referrals.

David Bauer asked if they are located in Middletown? Norman Bishop replied that they are housed on Rapallo Avenue in a site that was acquired with the help of CDBG funds.

David Bauer asked where they are in their business plan? They replied that that information could be sent to staff for dissemination to the Committee.

Grady Faulkner asked if they serve strictly Middletown and commented on the recent Middletown Press article that made the issue of HIV/AIDS in Middletown seem to not be a critical issue. They replied that there are many members of Middletown's community with HIV/AIDS that would benefit from this service.

Linda Wallace called for the ninth presentation, the Community Organizing proposal from the North End Action Team. Lydia Brewster presented that their project will try to develop a broad and capable internal leadership base from within the North End in order to increase indigenous ownership of problems and solutions to critical community issues. The project seeks to: 1) identify critical issues facing local residents, 2) create a sustainable process through a series of community conversations that involve pertinent stakeholders within any beyond of the neighborhood, 3) develop workable solutions that engage a broad representation of the neighborhood, 4) to recruit and train potential homeowners, 5) develop an intra-neighborhood communications network that encourages resident responsibility; and 6) establish the Erin Street Community Garden and new Ferry Street Garden.

Linda Wallace asked about staff and budget issues? Lydia Brewster replied that NEAT has been facing a staffing crisis due to limited resources.

David Bauer followed up with comments regarding the future of CDBG funding.

Linda Wallace called for the tenth presentation, the Family Learning proposal from the Middletown Adult Education. Staff and student presented that their project will seek to help low income families improve their lives by offering adult education to help parents gain skills to help them further their education or get better jobs. The program also offers early childhood education classes for children ages six weeks to 3 years so that parents can attend adult education to earn a diploma or learn English. All services will take place at the Middletown Adult Education Learning Center.

Avery Watson asked if the student would have gone to school without this program? The student replied that it would have been very difficult, especially without access to a baby sitter.

Avery Watson asked the students age? The student replied 22 years old.

Grady Faulkner asked how long has the program existed? Staff replied 12 years.

Grady Faulkner asked if most of the students are from Middletown? Staff replied that ninety percent are from Middletown.

Ronnie Bantum applauded the students and the program.

Linda Wallace asked since the Committee funded half of what was requested last year where did they receive the remaining funding needed? Staff replied that they found funding from the Middletown Arts Council, Liberty Bank, and United Way.

Linda Wallace called for the eleventh presentation, the 108-110 Spring Street Rehabilitation proposal. Seeing no one to present Linda Wallace moved to the next item on the agenda.

Linda Wallace called for the twelfth presentation, the Ferry Street Homeownership Redevelopment for Broad Park Development Corporation and Nehemiah Housing Corporation. David Berto and Michael Taylor presented that their project will provide 6 families with home ownership opportunities in Middletown's North End neighborhood. The future homeowners will enjoy new, high quality, energy efficient, and affordable homes, as well as the revitalization of their neighborhood. Other North End homeowners will enjoy the benefit of increased property values and all north End residents will be benefited by the beautification of their neighborhood.

Ronnie Bantum asked the presenter to explain what the chronic problems were in the North End. David Berto replied that the chronic problem was in inadequate housing for the residents that live there.

David Bauer asked where the other funding will come from for the project? David Berto replied that the other funding will come from the State Department of Economic and Community Development.

David Bauer asked how can the pot of funding that is required to be used for Middletown residents be spent on a project that includes State funding that requires that the project be available to all residents of the State. David Berto replied that the end result of the project will be that the homeowners will be residents of Middletown, and past experience shows that primarily the new homeowners will in large part come from Middletown.

Grady Faulkner asked to explain how they derived of 144 persons being helped by this project? David Berto replied that over a thirty year period given average turnout in properties and the number of person in a household for a two bedroom condo, you can expect 144 people to live in these properties at some point.

Linda Wallace asked a second time if any one was present for the 108-110 Spring Street Rehabilitation proposal. Seeing no one present Linda Wallace moved to the next item on the agenda.

Linda Wallace called for the thirteenth presentation, the Community Re-Entry Proposal for Easter Seals. Rona Scott and Rachel Tips presented that their project will support vocational re-entry services for 75 low to moderate income Middletown residents through Community Re-Entry Services. Community Re-Entry Services (CRS) assists ex-offenders in obtaining employment through pre-employment training, job

placement assistance, case management and job retention services. Community Re-Entry participants include male and female ex-offenders who are often single heads of households with very limited incomes, education and prior work experience. The Community Re-Entry Program has three main objectives: 1) prepare 75 low to moderate income Middletown residents for competitive/supportive employment; 2) provide and/or refer for necessary vocational support services to 75 low to moderate-income Middletown residents; 3) offer Middletown based CRS consumers with extremely limited work experience (and education) an opportunity to gain necessary work skills and job experience through a seven-week paid internship.

Linda Wallace explained that the Chamber of Commerce has a similar program and asked how Easter Seals' program was different? Rona Scott explained that Easter Seals' program focuses on women and children.

Linda Wallace asked if the participants are from Middletown. Rona Scott explained that typically they are but there will be transfers from New Haven.

Linda Wallace asked what \$5,000 labeled as "other direct costs" would be used for? Rona Scott replied that the funds would be used for four paid interships.

David Bauer asked since this is your first request for Middletown CDBG funds, what has changed to require you to seek this grant?

Grady Faulkner asked if this program will be housed in Middletown? Rona Scott replied that this program will be entirely Middletown.

Avery Watson asked who designed the program? Rona Scott explained that Easter Seals designed the program which came out of a needs assessment.

Linda Wallace called for the fourteenth presentation, the MacDonough After School Program proposal from the Middletown Board of Schools. Elizabeth Nocera presented that their project will initiate multidisciplinary afterschool parent involvement, tutorial services, academic enrichment, and recreational programs to engage students at Macdonough School. These programs will be especially important to the large number of minority and low-income students. The Macdonough School Program will provide a unique opportunity to reach students at an important time in their development and challenge them to be receptive to new experiences, enhance their critical thinking skills, and enhance their opportunities to improve their academic achievement.

Linda Wallace asked how is the MacDonough after-school program different from the Green Street Arts Center after-school program? Elizabeth Nocera replied that the MacDonough program is only for students at MacDounough School.

David Bauer asked if the Board of Health provided a grant? Elizabeth Nocera replied that there is not grant from the Board of Health.

Grady Faulkner asked if the program serves homeless? Elizabeth Nocera replied that the MacDough school district includes the homeless shelter and therefore provides services to the homeless.

Avery Watson asked if this is the same as the Community Health Center Homeroom program? Elizabeth Nocera replied that the Community Health Center Homeroom program is no longer being offered.

Linda Wallace called for the fifteenth presentation, the Section 108 Loan Payment proposal from the Middletown Department of Planning, Conservation and Development. Michiel Wackers presented that, by obligation, the City is required to repay the section 108 Loan from the Federal Government with CDBG funds.

Linda Wallace called for the fifteenth presentation, the Program Administration proposal from the Middletown Department of Planning, Conservation and Development. Michiel Wackers presented that their project will including all HUD reporting, bill paying, and subgrantee monitoring.

Linda Wallace called for the Committee to review the minutes from the previous meeting; Donna Mitkoski motioned to approve the minutes. Grady Faulkner seconded and the Committee approved the motion unanimously.

Motion to approve the December Meeting 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
Vincent Amato (Greater Middletown Preservation Trust Seat)			X			
Ronnie Bantum (Elderly Seat)			X			
David Bauer (Common Council Seat-GOP)			X			
Grady Faulkner (Common Council Seat-DEM)		X	X			
Andrew Kelly (Minority Seat)						X
Donna Mitoski (Handicapped Seat)	X		X			
Evan Noglow (Middletown Housing Authority Seat)						X
Richard Pelletier (Labor Seat)						X
Barbara Plum (Planning and Zoning Commission Seat)						X
Matthew Podolin (Youth Seat)			X			
Avery Watson (Low and Moderate Income Seat)			X			
Vacancy (Banking and Insurance Seat)						X
Vacancy (At-Large Seat)						X
<u>TALLY</u>			<u>8</u>			<u>7</u>
Motion Approved						

Seeing no more business the Committee, Donna Mitkoski motioned to adjourn at 8:00pm. Grady Faulkner seconded and the Committee approved the motion unanimously.

Motion to adjourn the meeting.						
<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/housing relations seat)			X			
Anthony Marino, Vice Chair (Real Estate Seat)						X
Vincent Amato (Greater Middletown Preservation Trust Seat)			X			
Ronnie Bantum (Elderly Seat)			X			
David Bauer (Common Council Seat-GOP)			X			
Grady Faulkner		X	X			

(Common Council Seat-DEM)						
Andrew Kelly (Minority Seat)						X
Donna Mitoski (Handicapped Seat)	X		X			
Evan Noglow (Middletown Housing Authority Seat)						X
Richard Pelletier (Labor Seat)						X
Barbara Plum (Planning and Zoning Commission Seat)						X
Matthew Podolin (Youth Seat)			X			
Avery Watson (Low and Moderate Income Seat)			X			
Vacancy (Banking and Insurance Seat)						X
Vacancy (At-Large Seat)						X
<u>TALLY</u>			<u>8</u>			<u>7</u>
Motion Approved						

Respectfully submitted,

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 Michiel Wackers, Deputy Director of Planning, Conservation and Development