

**CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

21-April-04

Present

L. Wallace, Chair
S. Englehardt, Vice Chair
D. Mitkoski
R. Bantum
L. Caditz-Peck
A. Marino
A. Watson
V. Amato
J. Robinson
E. Bogdan
E. Roberts

Absent

H. Henry
B. Plum

Also Present

M. Wackers
M. Apurina
(names of
presenters are
in minutes)

L. Wallace called the meeting to order at 5:00PM.

Linda Wallace called for the Committee to approve the minutes from the last meeting.
Tony Marino motioned to approve the minutes as is. Donna Mitkoski seconded the motion.
The Committee approved the minutes unanimously.

M. Wackers presented the Committee with the proposed allocation of CDBG funds in each category and for each project. The NEAT HQ/Police Substation project ranked high according to the evaluations in the scorecards. The Committee proposed that the reprogrammed funds (1998 Entitlement: Line item 390-552-101 Big Brother Big Sister \$1, 752.15 and Line item 390-552-107 Kuhn Mobile Worker Program \$2, 275.33) be used to create 1998 Entitlement Line item 390-552- NEAT HQ/Police Substation \$4, 027.48. These funds will cover the amount requested for NEAT HQ/Police Substation project of 2004.

J. Robinson suggested that the reprogrammed funds from 1998 Entitlement be used to fund the NEAT HQ/Police Substation project, because the funds have not been used and allegedly wrongly allocated.

M. Wackers added that the contracts for the 1998 Entitlement for Big Brother Big Sister and Kuhn Mobile Worker Program have expired.

J. Robinson inquired into the eligibility of all of the projects submitted in 2004.

M. Wackers explained that all of the projects appear eligible, and that he contacted HUD about the projects that might not be eligible. HUD provisionally approved all projects as eligible. The allocations of CDBG funds presented so far are according to the ranking of projects, which was created on the basis of evaluations in the scorecards submitted by the Committee members after the Public Hearing on March 10, 2004.

L. Wallace suggested that the Committee proceed to approve the proposal to use the Reprogrammed funds of the 1998 Entitlement to fund the NEAT HQ/Police Substation project. T. Marino motioned to approve the proposal as is. John Robinson seconded the motion. The Committee approved the proposal unanimously.

The Committee proposal is to be submitted to the Common Council for it to be resolved by the Common Council at its meeting on May 3, 2004.

L. Wallace suggested that the Committee proceed to discuss the proposed allocation of funds for other projects.

S. Englehardt: I have a concern about the CRT Senior Outreach project. It appeared to me that this project is designed to provide a new type of service. Why don't we fund it then?

J. Robinson: But haven't we already funded many other similar projects?

S. Englehardt: I was convinced that the service they want to provide is new in its nature.

A. Watson: To me, it sounded more like a reduplication of the existing services.

S. Englehardt: But they are going to involve people that are participating in the Meals on Wheels program. They will not be carrying it out, but they will assist in promoting it to seniors.

T. Marino: These people will not be greatly involved.

R. Bantum: I believe that CRT wants to hire a senior to carry out the project. They must have already considered that people from the Meals on Wheels program can only have partial participation.

L. Caditz-Peck: I believe that the Senior Outreach is a very good project and that it will work.

S. Englehardt suggested providing at least \$10,000 to the CRT Senior Outreach project. The Committee approved the suggestion.

L. Wallace inquired whether the Senior Empowerment project was disqualified. M. Wackers explained that it was not disqualified, but it did not score high enough in the ranking.

J. Robinson: The problem with it is that we are not sure whether the funds for this project will be used directly to benefit Middletown residents.

V. Amato: The answer of the presenters to this concern was not convincing.

L. Wallace: To me, it would not make sense to fund either of the senior projects in this case.

E. Roberts: As for the Senior Empowerment project, I do not see any difference in giving just a little or nothing at all.

The committee proceeded to discussing the allocation for the Neighborhood Link Boxing program.

L. Wallace: It seemed that the Boxing program is a great project. Why don't we consider giving them some seed money?

S. Englehardt: Did the Neighborhood Link succeed in acquiring the nonprofit status?

M. Wackers: Yes, they got the nonprofit status, and they also secured support from the Police department and some other organizations.

L. Wallace: This does not sound like too much support.

J. Robinson: We could consider giving some part of the requested amount, but it seems that this won't help them greatly.

L. Wallace inquired if anyone felt strongly about funding the Boxing project. There being no further suggestions, L. Wallace suggested that the Committee leave the project as it is for this year and encourage the Neighborhood Link to apply for funds next year.

S. Englehardt: I am concerned about the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) project. Isn't the service they propose to provide of a regional character?

L. Wallace: It is a section of the wide range of services that they provide.

S. Englehardt: My concern is that they will serve only a small number of Middletown residents. They advised that their volunteers live in Middletown, but these are not the recipients.

M. Wackers: They said that even the location of volunteers in Middletown is potential.

L. Wallace: I propose to give BBBS \$4,000 of the CDBG funds and see how they will manage the program.

J. Robinson: I agree with this. Let us see if they can find any Middletown matches for the program.

V. Amato: Why should we cut down the funding for the Chamber Worker Prep program? They seem to have an excellent program, which has been successful for years.

L. Wallace: We are not cutting the funding down. The Chamber has received this amount of funding for each year it has requested the CDBG funds.

T. Marino: We could probably consider giving them more funding in case we have some money left.

L. Wallace suggested that the Committee proceed to discuss the Public Facility projects.

J. Robinson: The Bus Station project has to be left out altogether. The Goodspeed Opera house is not coming to Middletown – the chances are even less than 50%.

T. Marino: I was not satisfied with the proposed plan for the project. I would leave it blank, too.

L. Wallace: Why is the requested amount \$100, 000?

M. Wackers: This is an estimated amount, which includes relocation, renovation, etc.

J. Robinson: I believe we should leave this project for a while and see whether the Goodspeed opera house is coming or not. Anyway, even if the project is funded, there won't be any immediate construction.

L. Wallace suggested proceeding to the Russel Library project.

M. Wackers: The project was ranked high, and the library has a great percentage of secured outside funds to meet the CDBG dollars. The library is on the final stages of its renovations and they have complied with the CDBG regulations so far.

V. Amato: The Russel Library is the jewel of Middletown.

L. Wallace suggested that the Committee proceed to discussing the PCD – North End housing project.

M. Wackers explained that North End has already received \$145, 000 from the City, and the new requested funds will be used to support the project in its implementation. Some of the buildings at the North End will be for rehabilitation, other for affordable housing, etc.

E. Roberts: How will the proposed allocation of \$50, 000 be used?

M. Wackers: The funds will be used for demolition and clearance. As you know, we are not allowed to use CDBG funds for construction.

J. Robinson: I hear the redevelopment Agency is taking care of the North end project.

M. Wackers: Yes. It is now being decided who will take over the project – the Connection, Inc. or the Enrichment Group. Both of them have very good proposals and are ready to start immediately. As the City has already made a contribution to the project, the Department of Planning, Conservation and Development is now trying to request CDBG funds to secure the maintenance of the project.

L. Wallace proposed discussing the Gilead Roof Replacement project next. She inquired if this project is for the replacement of the roof of just one building. M. Wackers assured her that this is the replacement of the roof of one building.

E. Roberts: Is Gilead going to generate any revenue on this project?

M. Wackers: No. Basically, I propose that we give Gilead a loan on this project.

J. Robinson: I would like to express my disapproval of the allocation for the Wardsworth Grove Improvements. I believe that this organization should be held responsible for the improvements and renovations of the property.

L. Caditz-Peck: We could probably consider giving them a loan on this renovation provided that they will be able to save energy and use the saved money for repaying the loan.

E. Roberts: But nearly 80% of the Wadsworth Grove are low-income, and they probably earn as little as 30, 000/year.

J. Robinson: I cannot agree with that.

E. Roberts: I do not approve of the project in its entirety either, but to judge upon the residents' income status, we will have to look into the IRS reports.

M. Wackers: I would like to explain that Wadsworth Grove was started by HUD, and the selection of residents is very strict.

J. Robinson: Do they have any matching dollars? I believe we dealing with the organization that has not been doing its job and bookkeeping very well.

T. Marino: I believe they are tied by HUD restrictions and have not been able to go as far as they probably wanted.

E. Roberts: They will probably not be coming back again to request other CDBG funds. I had the feeling they are really humble in their request.

J. Robinson: I am not absolutely sure about this. Maybe they will as for a roof replacement next year?

V. Amato: We could probably give them a long-term loan, similar to those that we give to low-income homebuyers.

J. Robinson: Then we could probably give them half of the requested amount, or something close to this.

L. Wallace suggested allocating \$60,000 of the CDBG funds for the Wardsworth Grove Improvements project. There being no further objections, the committee proceeded to discuss the Street Lights project. M. Wackers explained that no allocation was proposed for this project since the project scored poorly in the scorecards evaluations.

L. Caditz-Peck: How are lights supposed to be put up on Main Street?

J. Robinson: These are going to be absolutely new.

L. Wallace suggested allocating \$50,000 of the CDBG funds for the Street Lights project, unless there is some money left. In this case, the amount allocated could be increased to the requested limit.

S. Englehardt proposed reconsidering the allocations for Gilead projects. J. Robinson suggested allocating \$5,000 for the Fire Detection project and \$10,000 for the Roof Replacement. The Committee agreed with the proposal.

L. Wallace proposed discussing the CHC New Horizons project next. J. Robinson asked to remind him of the nature of the project and the intentions of the CHC. L. Wallace said that they are looking forward to renovating their porch, creating a dormer to serve as the staff office and securing the fire exit from the 3rd floor of the building where the offices are supposed to be.

T. Marino: We definitely need to address the issue of safety, and I believe the creation of a dormer is connected with the fire exit.

J. Robinson: They will definitely need a fire exit if they want to create a dormer. This is regulation of the fire code.

Looking into the breakdown of the expenses of the different parts of the project, the Committee agreed on allocating \$30,000 of CDBG funds for the CHC New Horizons project.

The Committee inquired into the successfulness of the Revolving Loans and were satisfied with the information provided by M. Wackers. S. Englehardt suggested that the Committee proceed with making a decision on how to allocate the funds left after all of the projects have been discussed. She raised the question of raising the amount of funds provided for the Kuhn Mobile Worker Program. J. Robinson suggested the following allocations: \$20,000 for Kuhn Mobile Worker Program, \$5,000 for the Gilead Fire Detection project, \$10,000 for Gilead Roof Replacement project and \$75,000 for the Street Lights project. The Committee agreed to this proposal and decided on adding the remaining \$1,000 to the allocation for the NBBBS project.

L. Wallace called for the Committee to approve the allocations of the CDBG funds for 2004. T. Marino motioned to approve the allocations as are. E. Bogdan seconded the motion. The Committee approved the 2004 allocations unanimously.

L. Wallace called for the Committee to approve of the contract extensions for Oddfellows Playhouse 2002 (window replacement, \$25,000), NEAT 2002 (community organizer, \$5,000) and Gilead 2002 (31 DeJohn Drive, \$20,000). T. Marino motioned to approve the contract extensions as are. Dana Mitkoski seconded the motion. The Committee approved the contract extensions unanimously.

T. Marino brought up the issue of the inadequacy of the scorecard evaluation system. L. Wallace suggested that the Committee discuss this issue at the next meeting.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Respectfully submitted,

Michiel Wackers
Community Development Specialist