

**CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

MINUTES

May-22-2007

Present

G. DALEY (CHAIR)
M. LONG (VICE-CHAIR)
J. INGLIS
J. FORTUNA
R. SANTANGELO
H. NOVICKI
J. MAKROGIANIS
D. BAUER
J. TINE
J. ALEXANDER
F. GANGULI
L. RUSSO

Absent

P. BUSARI
S. BROWN
R. WHITNEY
S. SHAPIRO

Also Present

M. WACKERS
W. WARNER
M. TAYLOR
D. BERTO
R. ROSENTHAL
B. KILGORE
S. KILGORE
B. CROSSKEY
J. SARBAUGH
E. MCKEON
C. BENDER
L. BREWSTER
E. NOCERA
L. BALDONI
C. WLKIN
E. ROBERTS
R. KLATTENBERGER
J. SAINES PINCH
C. JOHNSON
J. CAREY

Michael Long called the meeting to order at 5:10PM.

Michael Long called for the Agency review the minutes from the April meeting. Jim Fortuna motioned to approve the April minutes. Robert Santangelo seconded. Jennifer Alexander asked for clarification on the motion from the April meeting regarding the reallocation of Federal Section 108 funding and the future status of the Miller Bridge Redevelopment Plan. Gerald Daley agreed and requested that the motion to approve the minutes be amended. Jennifer Alexander motioned to amend the minutes. Michael Long seconded and the motion was approved. Gerald Daley called for a vote on the amended motion and the amended motion was approved.

Motion to amend the motion to approve the April minutes						
<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>YEA</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Gerald Daley			X			
Michael Long		X	X			
Jennifer Alexander	X		X			
David Bauer			X			
Shannon Brown						X
Peggy Busari						X
Jim Fortuna			X			
Frances Ganguli			X			
Joan Inglis			X			
John Makrogainis			X			
Hank Novicki			X			
Louise Russo					X	
Robert Santangelo			X			

Steven Shapiro						X
Joseph Tine			X			
Robert Whitney						X
<u>TALLY</u>			<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>
Approved						

Motion to approve the amended April minutes						
<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>YEA</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Gerald Daley			X			
Michael Long		X	X			
Jennifer Alexander	X		X			
David Bauer			X			
Shannon Brown						X
Peggy Busari						X
Jim Fortuna			X			
Frances Ganguli			X			
Joan Inglis			X			
John Makrogainis			X			
Hank Novicki			X			
Louise Russo					X	
Robert Santangelo			X			
Steven Shapiro						X
Joseph Tine			X			
Robert Whitney						X
<u>TALLY</u>			<u>11</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>
Approved						

Gerald Daley called for public comments for items on the agenda, and advised the public that the purpose of tonight’s meeting was for gathering and exchanging information not developing a solution for adoption. Gerald Daley invited the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

John Carey of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (ConnDOT) recognized the difficult situation that has been created in accessing the Miller Bridge neighborhood. ConnDOT is receptive to closing the Northbound turn into the neighborhood, but that would create a new problem for people traveling north and wanting to access the neighborhood. The railroad crossing at Portland Street onto Bridge Street is currently not appropriate for vehicle traffic. ConnDot also recognized that there is a makeshift path from Bridge Street to Hartford Avenue/Route 9 intersection. ConnDOT would like to build a berm to prevent such usage in the future.

Bruce Kilgore a resident of Miller Street stated that School buses use that makeshift path to provide safer method of merging with traffic, and believed that that path should be formalized. Furthermore, the City’s emergency garage should be removed and the extra space should be used to create a merge lane for residents exiting the neighborhood. Bruce Kilgore believed that shutting the northbound turn lane into the neighborhood would not be appropriate. It would further isolate the neighborhood, create a lengthy detour for people accessing the neighborhood and for emergency vehicles, and during heavy traffic force residents to sit in rush hour traffic jams, adding 20 minutes to their commute.

John Carey of ConnDOT asked what the status of the railroad crossing. B. Kilgore replied that it is only for emergency vehicle use.

John Carey of ConnDot added that Portland Street is not wide enough to handle two way traffic.

A resident of the neighborhood asked why St. John’s Church was not notified of this meeting. Gerald Daley stated that the Agency requested that the residents and property owners of Miller Street, Bridge Street and

Portland Street be invited to this meeting. Future meetings will include the Church and St. John's Street residents and property owners.

Gerald Daley summarized the goals the position of the Agency, in that it looks unlikely that the City will be able to complete the redevelopment plan, but wants to improve access and safety for the area.

Michael Long asked if moving the Southbound light north of the Miller/Bridge exit would provide safer access. John Carey replied that is was an option but is would significantly reduce the efficiency of the intersection with Hartford Avenue.

Earl Roberts stated that an easement should be acquired through the stockyard to the west of the Miller Street and provide an at grade crossing for two-way traffic.

Elizabeth Nocera asked if ConnDot has complete jurisdiction over the railroads. John Carey replied that ConnDOT is restricted, but there may be a possibility to work something out with cooperation from the City and the Railroad company that controls the line. ConnDOT also stated that any new at-grade crossing would need to be approved through the Connecticut General Assembly and the Governor. ConnDOT further stated that any solution if done too well will become a shortcut used by motorists trying to avoid traffic jams and create a new problem on a street that did not have a problem before.

Jennifer Alexander proposed that since there are only roughly 25-30 housing units and one restaurant in the Miller/Bridge area, why not close the Route 9 access and open the Portland Street crossing, thereby not creating a shortcut and increasing safety.

Rob Rosenthal asked why the Miller/Bridge area could not be acquired by the State for their future needs in redesigning the Route 9 North interchanges. ConnDOT replied that the State used to have the flexibility to do such things, but it is not realistic today with design/build regulations. Furthermore, ConnDOT is limited by time and money.

Lydia Brewster stated that there is not some consideration of liability, the current situation is outright dangerous. Who is responsible the City or the State? Gerald Daley replied on behalf of the City , it is the State's responsibility, but this is a complicated set of questions.

Robert Santangelo stated that there seems to be some consensus that shutting off Route 9 and opening the rear of the neighborhood is the way to go.

Jennifer Alexander asked who would pay for these improvements?

Gerald Daley replied that the State would need to weigh the liability versus the cost of providing a solution.

Shelia Kilgore stated that the neighborhood needs relief now, and certain things can be done immediately, such as improved signage and blocking the northbound intersection.

Michael Long added that something should be done soon. Michael Long added that he had seen many near accidents at this site on Route 9.

Gerald Daley stated that closing the crossing would be objectionable to the restaurant.

Members of the public spoke in favor of closing route 9 and opening a two-way at-grade crossing.

Other members of the public protested that such a solution would have an adverse impact on St. John's Church.

Lydia Brewster asked where in Connecticut does a similar situation as this exist? Lydia Brewster answered that it does not exist anywhere else because it is unsafe, and should be closed and an alternative implemented.

Bruce Kilgore added that a road over the railroad could solve a lot of problems. There is no way to make a good the access to Route 9 safe.

John Carey of ConnDOT summarized that something needs to be done quickly, but long-term solutions are expensive. He would return to the Agency in a few months to continue this discussion.

Gerald Daley called for an update on the Richman project on Ferry Street. Michiel Wackers replied that the news was the same, but a model unit is open and applications are being accepted.

Gerald Daley called for an update on the Broad Park project for homeownership in the North End. Michael Taylor of Nehemiah Housing reported that for acquisition of the properties a closing date of June 17th has been scheduled. The environmental studies are coming back with positive results for the development. The outstanding issues will be scanning the lot on Rapallo Avenue to see if there are any buried oil tanks and in 51 Ferry Street the removal and possible remediation of the two 55 gallon drums containing solvent. There is a meeting with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development on Thursday May 24 to proceed with the applications for funding. Broad Park has agreed to submit a draft PDA at the end of the month with the possibility of the City signing it soon after. 51-55 Ferry Street is still being investigated for the rehabilitation and new construction differences. Broad Park is still waiting to hear what the future of the Liberty Street building will be and we need to know the outcome so the Rapallo site can be planned.

Michael Long asked what has happened to 49 Ferry Street since the last report? Michael Taylor replied that it will be rehabilitated with an addition on the rear to provide the space needed for two units in the building.

Jim Sarbaugh asked what the status of 9-11 Liberty Street. Gerald Daley replied that the issue rests with the Economic Development Committee and the Economic Development Committee needs to decide if they want to keep it where it is, move it and how that gets funded or some other option.

Gerald Daley moved to other business and asked to discuss the summer schedule. Gerald Daley stated that he preferred to request that ConnDOT attend the September 2007 meeting, and in order to provide the Agency enough time to plan check for quorum of the Friday before during the summer months.

Louise Russo motioned to adjourn. John Tine seconded and the motion was approved unianimously.

Motion to adjourn.						
<u>MEMBER</u>	<u>Author</u>	<u>Second</u>	<u>YEA</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>	<u>ABSENT</u>
Gerald Daley			X			
Michael Long			X			
Jennifer Alexander			X			
David Bauer			X			
Shannon Brown						X
Peggy Busari						X
Jim Fortuna			X			
Frances Ganguli			X			
Joan Inglis			X			
John Makrogainis		X	X			
Hank Novicki			X			
Louise Russo	X		X			
Robert Santangelo			X			
Steven Shapiro						X

Joseph Tine		X	X			
Robert Whitney						X
<u>TALLY</u>			<u>12</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>
Approved						

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Michiel Wackers, Deputy Director of Planning, Conservation and Development