

CITY PLAN COMMISSION - PUBLIC HEARING - TUESDAY, JUNE 8, 1965 -
COUNCIL CHAMBERS - MUNICIPAL BUILDING - MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT

Present: John J. Higgins, Chairman
Carmelo J. Mazzotta, Jr., Vice-Chairman
I. Robert Traverse, Secretary
George J. Achenbach
Edward F. Button
Joseph W. Masselli, alternate member
Joseph P. Otfinoski, alternate member

Absent: Mayor Kenneth J. Dooley, member w.v.p.
Frederick W. Atkins, alternate member

Also

Present: Anthony S. Marino, Acting Mayor, Lawrence Moore, Technical
Planning Associates, B. Ralph Gustafsson, City Planner,
Sherman Beinhorn, Reporter, Middletown Press, Barbara
Sakelakos, Recording Secretary and approximately one hundred
and fifty members of the public.

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 7:32 P.M.

CHM. HIGGINS: It is 7:32. This hearing was called for 7:30. I'll now
read the call of the meeting.

City Plan Commission - Public Hearing - Tuesday, June 8, 1965 - 7:30 P.M.
Council Chambers - Municipal Building - Middletown, Connecticut

To consider the new Plan of Development for the City of Middletown,
under the provisions of Chapter 126, Section 8-23 of the General
Statutes of the State of Connecticut.

A legal notice of this Public Hearing was published in the Middletown
Press on Saturday, May 29, 1965.

Any and all persons interested may appear and be heard.

A copy of said Plan of Development is on file in the Office of the Town
and City Clerk of the City of Middletown and is available for public
inspection.

Since there is quite a group here tonight, I'll introduce the Commission
and our Technical Advisor, Mr. Moore and I'll start at the left hand
side. On my left hand side, the first gentleman is Mr. Gustafsson, the
City Planner. And the next position is Mr. Marino, who is Acting Mayor

and he's in Mr. Dooley's place tonight since Mr. Dooley is out of town. The next gentleman is Mr. Moore from Technical Planners. The next gentleman is Mr. Otfinoski, an alternate member of the Commission. Next, Mr. Achenbach, a member of the Commission. The next is Mr. Mazzotta, who is Vice-Chairman. On the right, Mr. Masselli, an alternate member. Mr. Button, a member of the Commission and Mr. Traverse, a long time member of the Commission. My name is John J. Higgins and I'm the Chairman. Now if anybody wishes to be heard, please come up close to the microphone so that the tape recorder will pick it up, state your name and address and we will be glad to hear your comments on the Plan.

MR. MAYER: My name is Julius Mayer. I live on Long Hill Road off of Pine Street. Mr. Higgins you stated that this meeting was advertised on May 29. Most people were only aware of this meeting last evening when it was given some publicity. Now before you proceed with this meeting, may I ask that you, is this sufficient time, since publication of the meeting as it did not give the public any time to organize or to question their neighbors and I therefore would prefer to know before we proceed with the meeting, whether it would not be better public relations to postpone this meeting 2 weeks from now or some later date as most of us were not aware of it until last evening when we saw the Middletown Press. Now you may be legally correct, but your not morally correct.

CHM. HIGGINS: Well I'm sorry that you feel that way Mr. Mayer, but as you say we are legally correct and I think that there has been considerable publication of this General Plan not only for the past month but for the past 2 years, and it has finally come to the point where we are bringing it to a Public Hearing and we want to hear the public's sentiments on the Plan that is presently constructed. Anybody else wish to be heard. Yes Sir.

MR. LABELLA: I don't know if it will pick me up from here. My name is Sal LaBella. I come from Tryon Street. I have been here before. It seems I'm here every year. The piece we have in question is a little piece of land that borders the end of Tryon Street. That previously was Suburban or Restricted Residential. This one piece of land is now like an island and the whole thing was made into apartments or multi-dwellings, but the fact is on previous plans they had Low Density as single or 2 family dwellings. Now Low Density according to the Press, means up to Apartments. So we oppose, that's 200 members that I represent of the Tryon Street, Lee Street and Sand Hill Road Association of which I'm President, we protest and would like it changed back to the way it was. Also we are concerned with the map in the Town Clerk's Office. It was kind of deceiving because as soon as you went into the Town Clerk's Office the first thing you saw was a little bit of a map which bore no relation to what you have there. The map that you see there was a folder behind the desk. I went to Mr. Gustafsson today and he couldn't find it until we asked for it,

so I don't think this is quite right in the true sense, the fact that it was deceiving. So I would want to go on record as opposing their change on that one piece of land.

CHM. HIGGINS: Thank you. Anybody else. Yes.

MR. REYNOLDS: My name is Paul Reynolds, Maple Shade Road. I represent only myself. I have not consulted with any of my neighbors except one.

CHM. HIGGINS: Excuse me, will you please talk into the microphone so that it will be picked up by the tape recorder.

MR. REYNOLDS: Thank you. I have had no opportunity to study this Plan extensively. In some respects it seems to me as if it is indeed a very broad, general and attractive Plan. I certainly support the idea of a circle highway somewhere in the center of Middletown. My first feeling is that although there are general features that are excellent, in many respects it looks to me as if this is not a Plan but an approval of tendencies that are underway, the things that are happening and this proposal is a stamp of approval. Another point, the redevelopment seems to me, to have as its primary purpose the redevelopment of the center of Middletown, which as we know needs redevelopment and it seems to me here, the center is the place where we should concentrate the commercial activity of the community with proper access near the downtown, have the commercial activity centered thereof and fingering out into the residential areas. We have some lovely surrounding countryside which, if we fingered these commercial arteries out into this countryside will be a great mistake. We all, I'm sure, agree that Route 6A is not a pleasant site and I think that is an understatement. I would hope that we could protect some of the approaches to Middletown which are indeed very lovely and I will speak specifically of the approach from the south and Route 17. I would feel that the Commission, the Planning Commission should take into account some of the natural features in making plans. Now it seems to me that the south part of Middletown has a rather natural buffer. We have a nice commercial area developing around Pameacha Pond. If this commercial zone extends all along Route 17 further out on South Main Street the area Durwin Street for example, will be profited with the commercial zoning all about it. As it is now, the area around Long Hill School is a lovely area for open spaces, park and recreation. I don't know what happened to plans for a school there. I understand there are some plans to move it.

CHM. HIGGINS: Pardon me, Professor Reynolds, are you addressing your remarks to the Commission or to the group here.

MR. REYNOLDS: Well I would suppose to both.

CHM. HIGGINS: Well would you please turn to the microphone so that the microphone will pick your remarks up.

the principle or a principle interchange with the interstate highway. The Plan also shows a proposed interchange on Country Club Road which the Highway Department has planned and presumably will build when the traffic warrants and it shows a connector quite a ways from that point over to the center. The, this map shows in light green; areas which are recommended for the present at least, to be kept as a rather rural residential area larger, partly because the nature of the land which is rugged and more rural and elsewhere and partly because of the high cost to the City if it were necessary for the City to put utilities, sewer and water out in those areas or to provide general list of services so that the most economic type of municipality would be to concentrate what you might call the suburban type of development in the areas shown here in the buff color and in general those would be of the type, the general type which goes is being built now, with houses on quite an ample lot for the most part. Some parts of this area as you go out might be smaller and eventually would all require the services of water and public sewer supply. A suggestion has been made on the Plan that certain areas in the outlying sections should become a small communities with a little more compatibly. The village community this, these are ideas which can be followed up as plans are made or developers begin to propose projects for specific areas. It might include some garden apartments areas. It might include houses more campatly situated in the general outlying areas, but they would be subject to careful planning by the Planning Commission under the general principle of cluster development which has become the most up to date type of planned subdivisions. The dark green areas are areas which are proposed to be within which the City should acquire little by little more land for recreation, park and conservation purposes. This Plan has been given so much publicity that I don't want to take your time by discussing this at length what's already been given in the paper. The general program for solving the school problem which has been discussed with the School Board and with various committees of the School Board and is covered pretty well in the Plan. I might remark a little about the downtown area which was spoken about previously with the redevelopment. This map here shows the proposed Route 6A, shows the proposed Route 9 at some future time there will have to be a major interchange, those 2 expressways and a new bridge across the river. As I mentioned, the Plan is based on this central section of Middletown being the major business area and we foresee for Middletown a very considerable expansion in the next 20 or 30 years, primarily because of the location and its relation to expressways and its location in the center of the State. There will not only be a certain amount of retail expansion with the growth of the City and the region around it but it will prove a desirable location for office and large organizations which might want to have representation. Insurance Companies or large corporations which might want to have District conferences or that type of thing and that as the statement that Mr. Reynolds made, you have a choice of having a good packed downtown area well planned and brought about through urban renewal

and all other or you spread out into the country, you spread out into residential areas you put business here and there and the business itself is in a desirable location from their point of view. The modern type of shopping center is a concentrated one where people can easily walk and park and park where you have good parking facilities. So we see in the development in this center, gradual building up of these blocks. You have a shop next door here where you have a parking garage and retail facilities. It will have to be more and more of that. You see it up in Hartford in Constitution Plaza which is doing, eventual promise as one of the major contributions to urban design in recent years and we proceed here, something on the same order with and parking becomes more difficult. There will have to be more multi-story parking, underground and roof top and somewhat of what you have here. This area is designed to take, fill the need for a great many years to, up to at least the year 2000 in the estimated amount of area for retail business for office spaces and there might be apartments and the need for intown motor hotels, restaurants and so on. The activities of Wesleyan University expansion is trying very much for urban renewal and due to certain peculiarities, I might say, that certain provisions of Federal law the City can get some very substantial credits from the land acquisition of the University which permits at very low cost to the City, far more extensive and much more valuable land economically, redevelopment that would otherwise not be possible. I guess Mr. Chairman I've given a general idea unless there are any specific questions later on I can. . .

CHM. HIGGINS: Thank you Mr. Moore. Now if anybody wishes to be heard. Mr. Camp please.

MR. CAMP: My name is John R. Camp. I live out on the Meriden Road in the general area of Camp Street. In the first place, I'd like to endorse what the previous speakers have said, Mr. Reynolds. When Mr. Reynolds spoke of preserving the residential areas against the encroachment of commercial areas which better be maintained in the central part of the City and also what Mr. LaBella with regard to Tryon Street. Although I do not know that particular area but I would like to raise the general question of why, in a Plan of this sort, all the changes seem to be in the nature of downgrading. Why isn't some effort to maintain the standing of the better regions or upgrade. You look at this map and in every case, I have to go over to the map now, in every case either the present more or less the haphazard development is encouraged. As Mr. Reynolds mentioned or it is being deliberately downgraded. Everyone is most familiar with the area where they live so I will take this area out here. This is an area which in the present time, my residence is here and these are very fine houses here, in the George Street area, notice I have to go around, is being developed in all the houses in there are nice single family houses. To take George Street, for example, when that property was sold by the developer to the people, the subdivider, to the people who built their houses there, you were covered in the deed that no one buying any of those lots on George Street could build anything but single family houses and that was the law on that property. A few months later, he undertook to sell the property behind, directly

behind their houses to suddenly put up apartments. Now, of course, it is a matter of record they came before you gentlemen for a change of zone over the protest of some of us residents. It was granted, we took it to court and we lost, but still, so the zoning change was made but the apartments haven't been built there. It's an ideal area for a single family development and now in this new Plan you not only have all this block here south of the Meriden Road for apartments, they call it Low Density and Multi-Family which I understand is garden apartments, but also this land north of the Meriden Road out where I live and if it should ever be developed for lots for residences, it's an ideal place for single family residences. There's no talk for apartments in a location like that. Now I don't understand why it is necessary for the Commission to adopt, which does a thing like that unless they are merely trying to recognize a situation which forced through this change of zoning and which was never utilized. In any case no apartments seem to be going up there now and yet if anybody wants to buy a house there, buy a lot and build a house he's faced with the possibility that there might be an apartment house next door because he hasn't got the zoning protection. Thank you.

CHM. HIGGINS: Thank you Mr. Camp. This gentleman here.

MR. BECKER: My name is Edward Becker. I'm the executive director of the Lutheran Social Service which owns and operates the Lutheran Home on Ridgewood Road. Lutheran Social Service is owned and operated as a charitable organization by the 141 congregations comprising the New England Senate of the Lutheran Church of America. We have been at the present address since 1949 and went into a nursing program with the new building in 1958 and 1959. On the map showing the connector, we notice that the connector runs very close to our property. I wanted to ask Mr. Moore specific questions as to how close this proposed connector would run to the northern most building comprising our institution in which there are 53 guests and patients at the present time. Although admittedly, we are not shown on the map as an institution, I notice that there is a key showing in light green, Institution, that are in existence and while we don't like to use the word institution nevertheless, in the true semantic sense we are an institution. Could Mr. Moore answer my question as to how far away from the building.

MR. MOORE: The exact location of that road is something to be determined in the future, the, in this stage of the Plan, the purpose is to show the general idea, the general project that there should be a road from the location of this proposed interchange on. The interstate highway goes through to the center and its exact location would have to be worked out through detail study which would take into account the various properties along the way. I'm sure that when that is done, due consideration will be given to the property you mentioned. We realized that it was there and we didn't intend to show anything to close to the building.

This is a schematic plan which doesn't show any exact location. It might be north or south of that. Quite a little distance.

MR. BECKER: We certainly wouldn't want to see it directly bisect our property and disconnect out home, Director's residence from the institutional part of the operation. I would say this that I have seen this carried out into operation in the City of Worcester where one of the 2 girls club buildings, certainly a charitable organization, had the Worcester expressway Route 290 cut through the backyard and at the third floor level of the girls club building is the expressway highway where trailer trucks as well as automobiles are permitted to go at the rate of 60 miles per hour. I have seen on Route 15 during the past several years, several trailer trucks go off the road and down into the ditches and if one ever went off that highway, it could very well crush 50 to 150 children at play. The Girls Club has not seen fit to demolish the building. The State of Massachusetts did not see fit to take it by eminent domain and get the building and get the young folks in a proper location so we have seen bad mistakes made by Governmental authorities. Let's hope that the day will never come when the trailer truck goes off the road at that point, but it could happen so we have distinct interest and do not want to see the run 20 feet from our 85 year old guests and patients. We would much rather see it 300 or 350 feet north of it. Thank you very much.

MR. MOORE: I might say in checking over the location shown on the map, it was intended to be entirely north of your property. We had the map of your property from the Assessor's office records and it is shown on the map entirely north of your property.

MR. BECKER: Fine. Thank you very much.

CHM. HIGGINS: Yes sir.

MR. DYPY: Edward Dypa, Markham Street, Middletown. I own the property above the Lutheran Home approximately 1500 feet of frontage and this road seems to meander, the proposed highway seems to meander right through it. Now I'm planning to build a home up there next month and I would like to know where to put it.

PUBLIC: LAUGHTER

MR. DYPY: I mean, I'd hate to put it in one location and have it moved to a third location. How definite is that proposed highway. Is it a 2 lane, I mean a 4 lane highway. If it is a 2 lane highway, how far north is it from the Lutheran Home because I can judge it fairly well, fairly decent from that point.

MR. DYPA: Thank you.

CHM. HIGGINS: Mr. Mayer.

MR. MAYER: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the efforts of all of you folks, but I would like to know does this 6A extension that is shown on this map here and there in some brown spots, does that lead from South Main Street up Pine Street into Long Hill in this beautiful residential area that we have there now, or is this further west whichever you wish to call it. It is very difficult without street names just to determine where it begins and how it goes. Generally, I have an idea but this along the Jewish Cemetery up Pine Street and then across Long Lane land over into 91.

CHM. HIGGINS: Again Mr. Mayer we can't give you any answers for the State Highway Department. If they decide that they are going to put the road there, they will put it there and they will put it there as they have done that on their previous movement on their roads. This is a proposed possibility as to where they will put their road. It hasn't been constructed. It hasn't even been engineered yet. It is not on the map yet, but they have an idea that they want to come in somewhere in that area. Whether they will come in, the State Highway Department will decide. We will try to influence them, but we can't do anymore than try to influence them.

MR. MAYER: So this is not definite.

CHM. HIGGINS: Absolutely not. Thank you sir. Yes sir.

MR. GARGAN: I have a question that does not require the decision of the State. Why did you decide to zone Commercially the area that Mr. Reynolds spoke about a little while ago on South Main Street. Did you ask the people in the neighborhood how they felt about it. Would they be willing to take on an assessment to build a park. Did you consult any of your constituents.

CHM. HIGGINS: Thank you. Yes sir.

MR. GARGAN: No. I would like an answer.

CHM. HIGGINS: I don't have any answer. This is the proposed General Plan.

MR. GARGAN: Well I'm sure you must have some reasons for deciding to make it Commercial. You didn't do it as a whim, you just said so a moment ago. I would like to know the specific details that led the Commission to decide to make this area Commercial. And that is a reasonable request.

CHM. HIGGINS: We had the services of a Planner, with a national reputation

and quite an expenditure to the City and this gentleman's decision is that this is good commercial land.

MR. GARGAN: Well is he here.

CHM. HIGGINS: Absolutely he's here. He's been here all evening.

MR. GARGAN: Would he speak to it for a moment, please.

MR. MOORE: As I mentioned, the Plan is to show general proposals and not specific boundaries or exact areas. Now in laying out the general basis of business property, business land, there is certain types of business which belong primarily along roadsides which there is certain concentration now on South Main Street. There are 1 or 2 businesses. I believe the Telephone Company has an installation down there and one or two others which has led us to believe that to go a certain distance south of Randolph Road would meet a need and with proper restrictions on the types of business, requiring certain limitations, substantial lot areas and proper of business buildings and so on, which would make a valuable area. Now the exact distance below along Route 17 which starts is a matter for working out with the zoning. The Plan is also a rather long range matter for the next 25, 30 years to the year 2000 as I said and contemplates the fashion that maybe it would be likely to be needed in that period. The, whether that should be zoned as far down as is shown on the Plan or whether it should stop at Randolph Road, I think, is a matter that the Commission will want to hear opinions expressed at this Hearing. That is the purpose of this Hearing and to bring out ideas, specific ideas from people who are interested in the particular areas there. It is obvious that a certain amount of land is going to be needed in the long run for business as witnessed by the development that has taken place. Now it might be some years before it expands to the full length that is shown there, but I think the Commission and I know we would like to hear opinions of people who are interested in that neighborhood pro and con having . . . business. As I said I'll exercise the fact that the exact areas shown on this map are schematic and are intended to show general ideas and don't necessarily show what will later be the more definite zoning boundaries as zoning follows up this Plan.

CHM. HIGGINS: That man with the newspaper has been asking to be heard. I'll have this gentleman heard first.

MR. MAYNARD: My name is John Maynard. I speak for a group of residents called the Long Hill Home Owners Association who would be directly effected by this zone change here, the one the Planner was just talking about. Just 3 years ago we fought the battle of this 27 acre piece of property and think our arguments then are still valid today, that this

MR. KENSEL: My name is Everett Kensel from Tryon Street. Mr. Chairman on this particular piece of land that Mr. LaBella was referring to at the intersection of Tryon Street and Saybrook Road. First, I want to go on record that the way it is drawn up in the Master Plan I would like to vote against it. Now according to the Plan, that's in the Plan that's in effect, that was amended back, I believe, in February of 1963, this particular piece of land is in a Medium Density Zone and I believe that is residential, am I right on that. Now the proposed here is putting it into Low Density which states that apartment houses can be built there. I'm against this for 2 reasons. We just had a revaluation of our land as residential out there and our land is, we've got some nice homes out that way and I feel that if apartments go out there, it is going to downgrade the land around there in the immediate area. There are 3 or 4 homes going up there now, beautiful homes along side of that. I think less than a year ago we were up here, the Association, before the Zoning Board and on apartments for a variance out there. Now that road of Tryon Street which is a connection into Sand Hill Road, I think you all know where that place is, the road is very narrow. We, if apartments go up there you are going to increase the traffic. You are going to have a hazard out there far worse than you have now on Newfield Street. It was turned down for that reason by the Zoning Board. It was another piece of land but right near the same area. Mr. Arnold Eastman, he couldn't be here tonight. He was just brought home from the hospital after an operation. I'm not much of a public speaker, I'm shaking up here. He owns a building lot approximately 150 square feet. He asked me to speak for him and also go on record against the change. He owns a building lot approximately 150 square feet right in the middle of this new change here and he was reassessed along with the rest of us and he said his land went up along with the rest of us too, so he is anticipating putting a home in the range of \$25,000 in there but as I say he was just brought home from the hospital and I talked with him on the phone. He says I was looking at it in the hospital bed. He said he was just disgusted and ready to give up so he asked me if I would speak for him tonight on his side to and if apartments go in there I believe it is going to downgrade the property. There are new homes going up there now and I would like to see it stay that way.

CHM. HIGGINS: Thank you Mr. Kensel. Yes Sir.

MR. VAN BEYNUM: I'm William Van Beynum President of the Middlesex Historical Society. I would like to ask a question. Has map 2 been formally adopted as a Plan by the Commission.

CHM. HIGGINS: No map has been adopted.

MR. VAN BEYNUM: The other question was, how does such a map as number 2 work in with the Redevelopment group.

CHM. HIGGINS: Well we've worked as closely as possible in conjunction