

MIDDLETOWN PRESERVATION BOARD  
MINUTES: JUNE 28, 1993  
(Joint Meeting with the Middletown Redevelopment Agency)

PRESENT

J. Bianco, Chair  
H. Novicki, \*  
S. Shapiro, \*  
B. Kronenberger  
N. Conaway-Raczka  
D. Vinci

\* = Also MRA Member

ABSENT

D. Gallitto  
B. Corvo

Staff Present

W. Kuehn  
C. Wilcox

ALSO PRESENT

G. Souto  
T. Stein, Press  
C. Miano, Press  
J. Fortuna  
G. Woods, MRA  
J. Milardo, MRA  
J. Makrogianis, MRA  
E. Rak-Roberts, MRA  
J. Guerin, MRA  
T. Raczka, MRA  
D. Campanelli, MRA  
L. Russo, MRA  
J. Tine, MRA

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m. in Room B-20 of the Municipal Building by S. Shapiro, Redevelopment Agency Vice Chairman and Preservation Board Member.

PUBLIC HEARING

S. Shapiro opened the public hearing on the amendments to the North End CBD/Urban Renewal Plan.

W. Kuehn read the legal notices as they appeared in the Middletown Press on June 12th and June 19th and explained the reasons for the amendments. There was no one present from the public who wished to address the Agency/Board.

In discussing the proposed amendments, L. Rak-Roberts asked about the 35 day Preservation Board review period. S. Shapiro responded that 35 days will allow for the Preservation Board to meet during the second week of the month and to send along a recommendation to the Redevelopment Agency for their meeting on the fourth week of the month. W. Kuehn commented that 35 days is standard in State Statutes for agencies meeting on a monthly basis. C. Wilcox also noted that it gives the potential of the Preservation Board to meet twice on a set of plans. L. Rak-Roberts urged a mix of talents on the Preservation Board for a different point of view. It was noted that there are two members of the Redevelopment Agency are members of the Preservation Board and there are two vacancies.

N. Conaway-Raczka asked if the final approval for tax abatement rested with the Common Council. There are three levels of approval - first, the Preservation Board recommending to the Redevelopment Agency; second, the Redevelopment Agency recommending to the Common Council; and, the final decision resting with the Common Council.

W. Kuehn explained the changes made from the original draft as a result of an opinion from the City Attorney's Office and further as a result of Planning & Zoning Commission action on June 23, 1993. Most of the changes deleted authority normally reserved for the Zoning Code; hence, references to the Proposed Zoning Map were omitted.

The Agency then discussed the applicability of the review process to any development activity within the Urban Renewal Area. W. Kuehn said that referrals will be made from either the Planning & Zoning Office or the Building Inspector's Office when applications are submitted for building permits. L. Rak-Roberts suggested that City staff develop a packet of information specifying the steps and the process; this should serve as a cover sheet for the guidelines of the various rehabilitation programs and the tax abatement program. It was also noted in discussion that persons who do not wish to apply for tax abatement need not follow the suggestions of the Design Review Board. They serve merely as guidelines for non-tax abatement projects. C. Wilcox noted that the guidelines are for any improvements which are visible from a public place. S. Shapiro said there is no enforcement authority if an applicant does not wish a tax abatement. W. Kuehn remarked on the three rehab programs already available for the area; Rental Rehab (HUD); Residential/Mixed-Use Rehab (CDBG) and Moderate Income Rehab (DOH).

H. Novicki noted the favorable Middletown Press editorial from June 26th. He suggested that more publicity be developed for the program including a flyer to the residents. In response to a question by L. Rak-Roberts, staff agreed to have a packet describing the format and timeline of the program ready within a week. D. Campanelli questioned whether the abatements would result in liens which would be forbidden by the various government mortgages. J. Bianco responded to questions of the Agency regarding what the Preservation Board would be looking for. He emphasized such items as continuity of cornice heights on Main Street and reassured the Agency that cost prohibitive demands were unlikely to happen. The guidelines address basic direction and character and are not meant to deter development or rehab.

After further discussion, it was agreed that staff would prepare a step-by-step process for those pursuing a tax abatement and a separate process for those not applying for tax abatement including applicable timelines. This should be sent to the Agency for the July meeting.


There being no further public comment on the formal public hearing or any other matter before the Agency, the Vice-Chairman closed the public hearing at 7:49 p.m.

After the Redevelopment Agency meeting, the Preservation Board and staff agreed to create a packet for potential rehabilitation customers which would include:

- a) a cover sheet;
- b) a time line which would be step by step "walk through" of the design review process;
- c) a copy of the design review guidelines;
- d) a description of the various rehab loan programs with instructions for applications;
- e) a copy of the tax abatement ordinance.

The Board also agreed to recess for July and August unless specifically called upon for design review.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

  
Cynthia G. Wilcox

CGW/lmk