

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

### MINUTES

AUGUST 12, 1996

#### Present

G.Daley-Chair  
J. Milardo Jr.  
R. Santangelo, V-Chair  
S. Shapiro  
J.J. Vinci Jr.

#### Absent

#### Also Present

J. Clark  
E. Thorndike, West Wings  
K. Kaffen, West Wings  
G. Weitzman, Armory  
E. Weiss, Press  
D. Blint, Courant  
V.J. Russo  
C. Wilcox, Staff.  
W. M. Kuehn, Staff

Chairman G. Daley called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. in Room 208 of the Municipal Building.

#### **Public forum:**

John Clark President of Calico Productions wished to speak at the public forum. He told the committee that he had been trying to go through Planning & Zoning to get property that he owns into commercial use on Washington Street. He is not looking for funding, but rather for support to have the zone changed back to commercial, as it used to be in the 1960's. The zone, as proposed by Planning & Zoning, (called B-3) would be perfect for his uses. He is now in a facility on Clinton Avenue; but he needs space and is growing, and is asking only for a reasonable use of his property. He was not happy that residents from Barbara Road were able to dictate uses on a state highway, on which he has two lots which are approximately 160 feet in frontage on Washington Street and 100 feet deep. There is parking for 25. The Plan of Development calls for commercial use in the Barbara Road area. Mr. Kuehn commented that he remembered when the commercial use was cut back in the 1960's.

S. Shapiro was concerned about road cuts; however Mr. Clark indicated that they needed no more than two cuts; and that his type office use would generate less traffic than retail. Mr. Russo had written a letter, and expressed a similar concern that the efforts of the Economic Development Committee were being thwarted by Planning & Zoning. Mr. Daley commented that the committee can be helpful by expressing its interest to Planning & Zoning; and having them take the Economic Development aspects into account. J. Milardo suggested having a meeting in a workshop type format with the Planning & Zoning and Wetlands Commissions; and also suggested having the Economic Development Committee be co-applicants on such zone changes as are being discussed by Mr.. Clark. There being no further discussion , the public forum was closed.

#### Minutes:

Upon a motion by S. Shapiro, seconded by R. Santangelo, the minutes of June 10, 1996 were accepted unanimously.

Upon a motion by S. Shapiro, seconded by G. Daley, the minutes of July 8, 1996 were accepted unanimously, with the abstention of R. Santangelo.

Upon a motion by S. Shapiro, seconded by R. Santangelo, the minutes of July 22, 1996 were accepted unanimously, with the abstention of J. Milardo.

**Economic Development Fund Report:** for the information of the committee members.

**Correspondence:**

Memo from Deputy City Attorney T. Lynch: This related to the Schuck gas station and Remington Rand properties. W. Kuehn reported basically that if we lease to someone who contaminates our property the city is not liable. J. Vinci asked what would happen if the tenant “goes bust”, to which Mr. Kuehn replied that the city would be back where it started, but still not liable.

S. Libby F.O.I. complaint: Mr. Kuehn reported that all complaints had been dismissed.

V.J.Russo letter: already discussed in the public forum.

New Enterprise Zone maps from the State: for the committees information. Middletown’s map looks O.K.

Postcard from C.C.D.A.: no action.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**The Armory:**

G. Weitzman designated the developer for the Armory Community Cultural Center Project reported on some new developments.

- (1.) His architects had met with the Veterans Council, to discuss where memorabilia and meeting rooms might be and both groups were pleased with the outcome.
- (2.) Douglas Bennett and Rebecca Lewelling of Wesleyan met with the Armory Board and the architects to tour the building and spent 3/4 of an hour talking about the project. Wesleyan is interested in helping the downtown.
- (3.) They made a presentation to Middletown 2,000, received several letters back and were urged to get moving in small “bits & pieces”, and not a major fund drive. Some local corporate donations have also been pledged.
- (4.) For the money on hand, the two front buildings and connecting hall would be made useful, and minimal amenities added. The basement and second floors are not yet accessible and would not be completed with this first phase.
- (5.) On this Thursday, the Theater of the Blind is coming to tour the building,
- (6.) At the United Way Auction, there had been many calls to use the building.

Mr. Weitzman indicated his concern about energy and operational costs and hoped to have the numbers on these by his architects by the end of August 1996. S. Shapiro had two questions: first, will he close on the building and second, is there anymore ore than \$50,000 pledged from Wesleyan. G. Weitzman indicated that he will ask for \$50,000 per phase, and there are four phases. R. Santangelo suggested grant writing and finding someone to look for volunteers or a professional grant writer especially experienced in looking for grants for the Arts. As far as closing on the property is concerned, the staff reminded Mr. Weitzman that photogrametric drawings of the facades are still needed for the historic easement. Finally J. Milardo suggested using the Carpenter's Union apprentices to build showcases for the Veteran's displays. He suggested contacting P.Cacciola; and to look for donations of supplies, such as the glass.

### **Saybrook Road**

W. Kuehn reminded the committee that the Planning & Zoning Public Hearing modifying the Plan of Development for the neighborhood retail centers would be this coming Wednesday, and asked for their support. There was some discussion about why one of these zones was needed on Country Club Road, but Mr. Kuehn said by supporting the five proposed areas does not mean all of them will be rezoned. A motion was made by J. Vinci, seconded by J. Milardo, and voted unanimously to endorse the proposed amendments to the Plan of Development to support the concept of neighborhood retail commercial service areas. After some discussion, the committee agreed that these small areas were quite far from the downtown and would not be taking away any of its business.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**REINVEST Loan for West Wings:** Ed Thorndike and Karen Kaffen presented their proposal for a REINVEST loan for a new downtown Gourmet Deli to be called Eleanor Rigbys. Mr. Thorndike reported that they had been in business almost six years; that they were basically a Wesleyan business; but that their new endeavor will be in the Phythian building of which they are now the owners. As well as the Gourmet Deli, they would serve breakfast and lunch to up to 48 people. They felt that this scale of eatery is an idea that is needed, and is not provided right now. They also felt it would be a help to them for their staff, which currently has to be laid off during the summer because of Wesleyan's schedule. Also, it will attract Wesleyan students downtown, because they are well known to the Wesleyan community. S. Shapiro felt that this was a very sound proposal. Mr. Thorndike explained the total project included \$155,000 dollars. \$100,000 was financed through Farmers & Mechanics and the Small Business Administration. \$25,000 would be a loan from REINVEST, \$30,000 would be a loan from JOBS , and the collateral is the building, and a second lien on the business assets. The building is owned by their Limited Liability Corporation "L.L.C." and they can guarantee the loan . J. Vinci felt it was a great idea and location, but had a concern about the high percentage of restaurants that the REINVEST Loan Program was subsidizing. J. Milardo, however, felt the restaurants create an atmosphere and a destination for Middletown. S. Shapiro noted that these owners have a lot of experience; and the committee, in general, felt that they would do well. Upon a motion by S. Shapiro, seconded by J. Milardo, it was moved unanimously to grant a \$25,000 REINVEST loan with all the proper collateral agreements. Mr. Thorndike indicated

that they planned to be open by mid-September. There was some discussion about the City Right-of-Way, to walk between the Pythian and Theater buildings and the desire to have it well lit and planted to encourage people to walk thru from the park. W. Kuehn thought that the walkway was privately owned; but will have the legal department check.

**Surveying questions:**

There were several questions about the choice of a surveyor which was needed in a hurry for the Convent moving project. S. Shapiro asked why an out of town person was chosen; others asked why the City is paying for this at all, when licensed surveyors and engineering staff in Public Works could do it. W. Kuehn commented on the need for an A-2 survey and that the engineering department had been very helpful in giving the discs and paper copy of their results to the surveyor who could certify it properly. J. Vinci felt we should find ways to avoid this conflict in the future. A motion was made by J. Vinci, seconded by R. Santangelo, and voted unanimously to repay, the Mayor's Contingency fund \$1,300 and at the same time ask, why, ( 1.) A local firm was not awarded the job, and (2.) even more importantly, why was this job not done in house.

**D.E.C.D.**

W. Kuehn noted copies of letters in the packet were "trial balloons for two possible new industrial areas." In the Laurel Brook area, sanitary sewer was being proposed to go to Durham and would be a 90%- 10% split with the state if this is accepted as a project. Midstate RPA will put together more of this proposal. W. Kuehn then showed a map of the proposed Brickyard Industrial Area (including Portland Chemical, roughly abutting Primary Steel). He showed a design which would move the ingress/egress road to come in across from Wilderman's Way, probably with a light, which will assist both the industrial and school traffic. After some discussion of who is involved, including D.E.P., the committee felt that the proposal was worthwhile pursuing. Upon a motion by S. Shapiro, seconded by J. Milardo, the Committee moved unanimously to proceed with the D.E.C.D. in developing these two projects with State assistance.

**TwinVane**

W. Kuehn reminded the committee that the Twin Vane Industrial subdivision at Bradley and Middle Streets had been approved some years back. Remington Industries owns a 26 acre parcel abutting this, which if developed together, would greatly enhance both properties. Remington Industries bought this property from F.D.I.C.; they are not developers, but rather speculators in land. They asked if the City might help, and asked if it would make an offer on buying their land. The properties do need each other.

The committee suggested that B. Hill and L. McHugh work with the owner to get a good purchase price. B.Hill also should find out what the purchase price from F.D.I.C. was, and staff ask J. Ziomek (Tax Assessor) and S. Garafalo (Tax Collector), what its current value and tax status is .

**Proposed change in job description for Project Officer.**

Chairman G. Daley indicated that this item was before the Personnel Review Board, and reminded the committee, that the position of Acting Assistant Director had been eliminated in the budget. He

felt that the new proposed job description reflects what the Department really needs, and should that be approved, the end result would be good. The old job description of Project Officer would be eliminated. A motion was made by S. Shapiro, seconded by R. Santangelo, and voted unanimously to support the proposed job description for Project Development Manager with the understanding that the old Project Officer would be eliminated.

### **North End Industrial Area**

1. W. Kuehn reported that purchase orders had been cut for Cardinal Engineering and Mark IV contractors for the work to be done under the Bridge. This should be completed by August 28, 1996, when school begins.
2. Regarding the Remington Rand building Phase II study, W. Kuehn reported that Marin Environmental is doing the work plan for the Phase II currently.
3. A motion was made by S. Shapiro seconded by J. Milardo, and voted unanimously to go into Executive Session to discuss purchase of real estate pursuant to State Statutes 1-18a (e)(4). Upon a motion by S. Shapiro, seconded by R. Santangelo the committee moved unanimously to come out of executive session.

A motion was made by J. Milardo, seconded by S. Shapiro and voted unanimously to make an offer on the Package Store based on the cost discussed; and to authorize an appraisal on Redwing based on the income approach.

### **REINVEST Filing Expenses**

W. Kuehn informed the committee that action needs to be taken on keeping access to the \$100.00 fee paid by REINVEST applicants to pay for some filing expenses. The recommendation is to set aside \$500.00 from those fees into a separate line item. A motion was made by G. Daley, seconded by R. Santangelo and voted unanimously reserve in a separate line item, the applicant's filing fees, starting with \$500.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

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Cynthia G. Wilcox, Project Development Manager

CGW\gr

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