

City of Middletown, CT

Economic Development Committee

Minutes from the Economic Development Committee Meeting of September 8, 2008

<u>Present</u>	<u>Also Present</u>
G. Daley, Chair	W. Warner
R. Santangelo	R. Kearney
H. Kasper	
J. Bibisi	
D. Bauer	
Public: L. McHugh, P. Hughes, Atty. Antin, Atty. Borkowski, T. Davis, C. Johnson, E. McKeon, R. Jukonski, M. Adams, F. Maratta	

Minutes

- A Call to Order:** Daley called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
- B Public Session:** McHugh stated support for the extension of the purchase contract with Jukonski Truck Sales for 680 Newfield Street.
- C Minutes:** Kasper made a motion seconded by Bibisi to approve the minutes of the Economic Development Committee August 11, 2008 meeting. The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.
- D Communications:** none
- E Old Business**
 - 1) Sale of Remington Rand**
 - a) TWB Properties, LLC :** no discussion
 - 2) Harbor Park Restaurant lease:** Maratta presented plans to extend docks, adding slips and a floating decommissioned naval vessel at Harbor Park and a bus shuttle stop to Main Street. Additionally presented plans to increase parking by 110 spaces along RT 9 and expanding the parking to the north of the north lot and eastern expansion of the south lot. Santangelo expressed concern over expanding the north lot and the loss of the path and questioned the exact measurements of the expansion. Maratta described the size of the expansion. Maratta stated the north part of the park is never used and Lady Katharine ship has installed

electricity in the north part. Santangelo stated the north part is used. Daley discussed the path. Santangelo questioned the effect on the boat house and access for boat launch. Maratta stated there would be no affect. Maratta stated the mission of his company is to make the restaurant a year round operation rather than just the current 9 months. To attract people in the winter the view must be more interesting because the view towards Portland is just a black hole at night. Maratta presented the idea of an ice rink and noted the future connection with Martin Luther King Drive under RT 9. Bauer noted several red flags questioning the potential of the Becky Thatcher paddle boat and issues with DOT in expanding parking along RT 9, DEP and proposed docks, working with the Coast Guard and that the city used federal funds for the Harbor Park expansion. Daley stated federal funds where for the bulkheads. Bibisi questioned the MOU with Sullivan & Hayes which Warner stated has expired. Bauer stated Harbor Park is for the public. Maratta noted Becky Thatcher would have problems with DEP allowing a non water dependent use. Bibisi departed from the meeting. Daley asked Maratta who would fund these improvements. Maratta stated he would be spending his funds on restaurant improvements and suggested state funds. Warner stated the legislators could be asked. Bauer stated the docks length might be in the channel. Maratta described the channel. Warner noted barges come close to the area which Maratta denied. Maratta stated the channel issue is the turning basin area. Daley noted the significant improvements to the restaurant and parking. Bauer noted the need to use mass transit with the trackless trolley as an alternative to increasing parking areas. Warner noted the state RT 9 project and connections to the river with the design of the new Riverview Arcade garage. Warner noted the city and Harbor Park Restaurant have a January 2009 pre-trial court date. Maratta noted the potential for mediation. Warner summarized the project along with the future Harbor Drive RT 9 ramp closure. Bauer noted the Planning Dept. is very good about putting plans up on the web and asked that the proposal be put on the website. Maratta said he would get copies of the plans to Warner.

- 3) **City Purchase Open Space of 1.04 acres of private land on River Rd.** Warner described the map of the small piece of property noting the steep topography and that Mary Adams wished to donate the land to the City. Bibisi asked if the property was off the road. Warner affirmed stating there is a right of way at the entrance to the power plant. Bibisi made a motion seconded by Santangelo for the City of Middletown to accept the donation of the land. The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

F New Business

- 1) **Request to purchase city land on Newfield Street: a portion of Map 10, Block 11-1, Lot 22A-24:** Attorney Antin stated Dr. Nelson would like to buy the

site of approximately 3,000 square feet to extend his property and add access on LaRosa Lane for the safety of his clients. Bibisi stated this makes sense. Daley questioned if this action would comply with the ordinance. Warner noted the utility box on the site and that the ordinance requires Economic Development Committee to designate the property as surplus before the request is circulated to city departments for comment. Bauer questioned which site on the map is in question. Warner explained the map and the site. Santangelo and Bibisi stated this would be good safety and made sense. Dr. Nelson stated he maintains the site and noted he might consider installing a sidewalk and described how his building sits back from the road. Daley questioned who would determine the price of the site. Warner stated the Assessor would determine the value. Bibisi made a motion seconded by Kasper to declare the property surplus and begin the process as required by the ordinance. The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

- 2) **Portland Chemical: Option to Purchase 380 Newfield Street by Jukonski Truck Sales:** Attorney Borkowski stated Jukonski was prepared to purchase the property until pollution was discovered at the site. The contract expires November 8, 2008 and the site is still not clean and asked for an estimation of when the site would be clean. Borkowski has spoken with Deputy City Attorney Tim Lynch about extending the contract. Warner stated the studies and remedial action plan (RAP) are complete and the RAP is not complex but the Army Corps of Engineers and the DEP are involved. The Mayor has met with Richard Jukonski. The RAP would take the pollution out of the site and cap the site. DEP is making this a lengthy remediation process and not accepting the RAP and capping. Borkowski stated the capping would be acceptable to Jukonski which would use the site for parking trucks. Warner stated the cap is feasible and no buildings are planned for the site which would be for parking. Daley questioned what the requested term for the extension would be. Borkowski stated any time would be acceptable and that Jukonski is willing to close within 90 days of notice that the site is clean. Borkowski suggested a 3 year extension of the contract. Warner stated the Mayor and Lynch would sign the contract extension if Economic Development Committee agreed to the extension. Santangelo questioned whether the wetlands flowed into the CT River. Warner stated the wetlands are isolated and of no value. The site is before the rail line and covered with invasive fragmities. The site was previously a concrete slab with tanks and the drums were buried on the site. DEP is treating the site as a wetland. Bauer noted the sales price of \$153,000 and asked how much money the city had expended on the site. Borkowski noted the foreclosure and the city acquiring the site and became the owner of the pollution. Warner stated the city foreclosed with environmental assessment documents prepared by Woodward & Currin with \$106,000 in cleanup but the company missed the information on the reference maps. Primary Steel hit drums which triggered an emergency response resulting

in \$300,000 in city expenditures and \$450,000 in federal expenditures. Daley stated the cleanup was obligatory. Warner noted no responsible party has been identified. Daley stated the city received responses from the RFP and Primary Steel and Jukonski Truck Sales combined their proposals. The site had development potential prior to the drums being discovered. Borkowski stated Jukonski would still use the site to park trucks. Bauer questioned the future use of the rail right of way for a bike path. Borkowski stated Jukonski would be just parking trucks on the site. Santangelo made a motion seconded by Bibisi to recommend a 3 year extension of the contract. The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

- 3) **Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce: Small Business Development Center proposed grant agreement:** Warner described the proposed contract. Bibisi asked where the Center would be located. McHugh replied at the Chamber. McHugh reviewed Hughes background stating the services would only be available for Middletown businesses. Companies would not have to be Chamber members. Hughes described the services. Bauer questioned how the grant would be funded. Warner replied the Economic Development Fund. Bauer stated the local economy had not changed since this proposal in June 2008 and this would be a backstop and a reasonable investment. Bibisi made a motion seconded by Santangelo to recommend the \$25,000 grant to assist in the funding of the Small Business Development Center. The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.
- 4) **DECD Urban Jobs Application: Stone Resources, 241 Middle Street:** Warner presented the information. Warner stated a summary of the tax analysis would be sent to the committee members. Bauer made a motion seconded by Santangelo to recommend the application to the Common Council. The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.
- 5) **Economic Development Fund: transfer of closed line item balances:** Warner described the information to consolidate miscellaneous line item balances as the Finance Dept. implements the new Admins system. Santangelo made a motion seconded by Kasper to recommend to the Finance Dept that the balances be transferred to the general Economic Development Fund balance. The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

G Status Reports

- 1) **Economic Development Fund, monthly report**
- 2) **Future Economic Development Projects, monthly report**
- 3) **Economic Development Specialist Report**

4) REINVEST Loan Program, monthly summary report

5) JOBS Loan Program, monthly summary report

H Other

1) October meeting date change to 10/14/08 Room B-20 at 6 PM: Daley noted to the committee the change.

2) Bauer asked what had happened on the Realtor Reception event. Warner and Kearney stated the mission had been accomplished and that commercial realtors now understand that the city is approachable and welcoming to development.

3) Warner updated the committee on the Army base site search.

I Adjournment: Bauer made a motion seconded by Kasper to adjourn at 7:16 PM. The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.