

Ralph H. Shaw, II, Chairman; Eric G. Lowry, Vice-Chairman; COMMISSION
Cos Giuffrida, Secretary; Commissioners - Dr. Christie E. MEMBERS
McLeod, Paul P. Parisi, Sebastian J. Passanesi, Gerald J. PRESENT
Lentini, Thomas E. Lineberry. Mayor Marino arrived at
8:30 p.m.

Edward J. Kalita, George Augustine, Conrad Tyaack. COMMISSION
MEMBERS ABSENT

George A. Reif, Director; Catherine V. Raczka, Assistant STAFF MEMBERS
Director; Eileen Rogers, Recording Secretary PRESENT

Gerald Daley, Administrative Assistant; Phil Bauer, STAFF
Engineer, Public Works Department; William Kuehn,
Municipal Development Coordinator; George Finch, reporter,
Middletown Press, and two members of the public.

Commissioner Lentini substituted for absent Comm. Kalita

CHAIRMAN SHAW

I would like to call the meeting to order. Commissioner
Lentini will sit for Commissioner Kalita who has indicated
that he will not be here. We have only one item for the
public hearing tonight and I will ask the Secretary to read
the call - notice of that meeting.

SECRETARY GIUFFRIDA

THE MIDDLETOWN PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION WILL HOLD A
PUBLIC HEARING SEPTEMBER 8, 1976, STARTING AT 7:30 P.M. IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, DE KOVEN DRIVE,
MIDDLETOWN, CONNECTICUT, to consider the following:

A proposal to adopt a Capital Improvement Program
(CIP), authorized by Section 8-23 of the Conn.
General Statutes and by City Ordinance. The CIP
is a supplementary document to the Plan of Develop-
ment. It inventories existing community facilities
and recommends priorities for future capital
improvements, based on proposals filed by City
agencies. CAPITAL
IMPROVEMENTS
PROGRAM

The proposal, which consists of a text, has been
filed in the office of the Town Clerk.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

That notice appeared in the Middletown Press on Saturday,
August 28th and Saturday, September 24th thereby - excuse
me - Saturday, September 4th, thereby constituting the
legally required notice of this public hearing. I can
see that all the publicity and the editorial in the papers really
brought the public out. There's a wild interest in this
activity. I'll ask that our Assistant Director address
herself to the moment.

ASS'T. DIRECTOR RACZKA

Well, as the Planning & Zoning Commission, I am sure that we're

all aware of the fact that we deal not only with the present community but with the future communities like - I am going on record as a document for future Middletown residents to know that we were at least in some ways thinking about them. Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes authorizes Planning and Zoning Commissions to adopt programs to implement the Plan of Development, including a Capital Improvements Plan. The CIP supplements the Plan of Development which was adopted by the Planning & Zoning Commission last June. At the public hearing on the Plan of Development, it was noted that additional information would legally be adopted by the Planning and Zoning Commission and one of the documents to be adopted was a Capital Improvements Program. The CIP - this document - links budgeting and financial information with comprehensive planning policy that is set down in the Plan of Development. Capital improvements or community facilities are tangible responses to the educational, recreational, cultural and societal needs of Middletown. These facilities are important to Middletown because they stimulate other desirable land uses throughout the community. The Capital Improvements Program - CIP - includes a variety of information on existing and proposed capital facilities. One important feature is a map showing the general location of existing community facilities. This is the map that is in the Capital Improvements document. The numbers correspond to other sections of the book where further information can be found. There are three types of community facilities. The first are buildings which meet the administrative, educational, cultural, health, safety and recreational needs of the community. Examples are the Russell Library, Middletown High School, the Police Station and the Municipal Building. The second type of community facility are public works and utilities that provide water, power, light, sewage treatment and so on. Examples are sewer and water pumping stations and these are also found on that map.

COMMISSIONER

Did you send us a map?

MS. RACZKA

I think we decided to send them to the Commission when this is heard at the public hearing. I don't know.

The third type of community facility includes the purchase of public lands to provide open space. An example would be the open space that was purchased in Westfield. But Middletown has further tailored the basic Capital Improvement procedure to make City government even more responsive to community needs. All municipal agencies must file proposals for capital improvements with Planning and Zoning before the Council will authorize any expenditures. Planning and Zoning reviews proposals for conformity with the Plan of Development and makes appropriate comments. All information on the proposals comes from the interested departments or agencies. They are solely responsible for assuring that the proposal accurately reflect the status of the project. There is to be a yearly cycle for review of capital improvement programs and the cycle is set down in the basic document. Each December, municipal agencies will

begin preparing capital improvement proposals and they will revise proposals that they have already submitted, and generally revisions will pertain to financial information. In January, the Planning and Zoning Commission will analyze prior and current year financial data. By February 1, revised proposals and any new proposals for capital improvements will be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission. During the months of February and March, the Planning and Zoning Commission will analyze the proposals with respect to three things. The first is Middletown's capabilities, policies and priorities. The second is Middletown's overall objectives for the City's future. All the projects must be studied for their impact on each other as well as their relationship to the Plan of Development. And, finally, each project will be looked at for their relationship with each project with reference to timing. After the projects are analyzed, the Planning and Zoning Commission will conduct a public hearing on the CIP. After the hearing, there will be an opportunity for modification and review of the Plan. The Plan is adopted by the Commission and is then forwarded to the Council. For the Council, the plan will serve as a long-term community-wide information source for their immediate, specific financial decisions on capital projects. - decisions which they make at almost every one of their meetings. This is the first year the system has been implemented so this public hearing tonight corresponds to one that would normally be held in April. The whole project cycle will begin again in December of 1976. The most important feature of the Capital Improvement process is that the Planning and Zoning Commission review and comment on all capital projects for their impact on local growth. It is crucial that all the projects be reviewed together. Changing factors - such as funds suddenly becoming available for a special project - might affect short-term priorities, but long-term priorities across the board will remain relatively constant, within the system established by the programming procedure. All the capital proposals are given priority designations or groupings. There are four basic groupings. The first group is straightforward and this covers capital projects that are already in progress, have been approved by a formal vote, and capital improvements that are mandated by State and Federal governments. By far, this includes most of the projects on this year's CIP. Examples are many: The TOPICS program along Washington Street, improvements to City School Field, the Emergency Alarm System, a sewer facilities plan, certain stages of riverfront improvement. There are four criterion in the second group. The second group has capital improvements which eliminate a proven or obnoxious hazard; capital improvement which replace an obsolete facility, or maintain and better utilize an existing asset; capital improvements which benefit Middletown's economic base by increasing property values, and finally, capital improvements which reduce operating costs and would result in better services to Middletown's residents. Examples of the second group are needed school renovations, improvement of roads, and expansion of office space for the municipal building. Projects were placed in the third group for one of two reasons. They are either required by community growth to prevent reduction of services or they eliminate a potential hazard to health and safety. Examples of this third priority are

a solid waste disposal facility, a filter plant that might be needed at Mt. Higby, an annual road maintenance program, aerial mapping, Russell Library renovations, and a renovated downtown fire station.

The fourth group - and this includes projects that are still important to Middletown's future development. The fourth group has three basic rationales. They include capital improvements which provide a new facility or asset to the community, or improve an existing standard of service; capital improvements which have social, historic, ethnic or aesthetic values, and finally, capital improvements which increase public convenience or comfort. Examples in this category include much new construction projects; radio security for the schools, the Reynolds property, possibly a youth center and an ice rink.

In conclusion then, there are several key points to bear in mind in reviewing the Capital Improvements Plan. The plan is a Planning and Zoning - the Capital Improvements Program is Planning and Zoning's recommendation to Middletown for capital priorities. This recommendation is in line with the goals that are articulated in the official legal Plan of Development; the grouping are a systematic evaluation of all proposals for capital facilities, recognizing that a short term emphasis of particular municipal agencies might differ; all proposals are based on information supplied by the involved interested agencies.

In conclusion then, the CIP is the unique contribution of the Planning and Zoning Commission. While individuals pursue their own specific objectives for a limited service area, only the Planning and Zoning Commission is responsible for the needs of the present community in 1976 and, just as importantly, for the future community. So we come - in this discussion we come full circle with what we started in the beginning.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

Thank you, Cathy. Are there any questions or comments of the commissioners? Paul.

COMM. PARISI

This will be adopted by Planning and Zoning, then it will go to the Council. Now, you know, we rated these things as priorities. Is there anything in there that would - for example - that youth center is priority 4. If this -

MS. RACZKA

There's nothing in there that -

COMM. PARISI

(Inaudible first few words - 2 talking)- as such by Council - you know - three months from now we fund the Youth Center and build one. It kind of goes from 4 to 1.

MS. RACZKA

Right.

MR. PARISI

There's nothing to preclude that type of thing from happening.

MS. RACZKA

That is correct. Something moving up. Looking at the criteria set down here, it can't be - and on the information that's already been submitted to the Planning Commission, it can't be changed for the purposes of this but that does not mean there isn't any shifting.

COMM. PARISI
O.K.

MS. RACZKA

And the Capital Improvements is a yearly review of all the projects.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

I don't quite understand what you said. If I understood you, you said it could not be changed in this document or in the base of this document at the moment. Is that what you're saying?

MS. RACZKA

Looking at -

CHAIRMAN SHAW

What if someone here had a very strong, rational argument for changing a priority. Why couldn't that be done?

MS. RACZKA

It could be done. The Commission could do it based on discussion.

COMM. PASSANESI

(Inaudible first words - 2 talking) Common Council that moves it from four to three to two.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

Exactly.

MS. RACZKA

The action is. Right. Based on what they do.

COMM. PASSANESI

What you've listed there is just what the Commission feels -

MS. RACZKA

Groupings based on the priorities set down in the Capital Improvements Plan.

COMM. PASSANESI

I don't think it's too important the way you list them. I think it's the Common Council's attitude is the way they want to finally use them.

MR. REIF

Well, she's actually -

MS. RACZKA

What's important is to look at all the capital improvements in Middletown and to look at them in terms of their priorities - the designations and the reasons for placing them in each priority that I have. The Common Council has their own system of priorities that they're interested in.

MR. REIF

Actually, priority 1 has already been funded so if you want to move something into priority 1 you fund it. It automatically goes.

MS. RACZKA

Right.

COMM. PARISI

I have a question. One of the things that I look at here - this aerial mapping - you know - Priority 3 is

MR. REIF

You want to make that first priority?

COMM. PARISI

You know - I put it - you know - we don't have anything lower than four. As far as I'm concerned - you know - really, at 2 1/2 I would do a lot more with that kind of money before I (inaudible word) the city and I wondered why we gave it a priority 3.

MS. RACZKA

Well, that's an important planning tool.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

On the other hand, you might find that your own Inland-Wetlands agency would find that a tremendously valuable tool.

MS. RACZKA

Right.

COMM. PARISI

I don't doubt that -

MS. RACZKA

The Tax Assessor's office.

COMM. PARISI

I have no question that it's valuable. (inaudible first few words - 2 talking) two and one half million dollars, I would -

MR. REIF

Doesn't have a lot of public relations value maybe, but it does have a lot of technical value.

COMM. PARISI

Perhaps.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

No. I understand what you are saying.

COMM. PARISI

Inaudible first part of sentence)- does it again, you know.

COMM. PASSANESI

Three to four months to six months could make that whole list change dramatically. (Inaudible word) what the Common Council has to say. We place this now or -

CHAIRMAN SHAW

Gerry, take a microphone please because we're on a tape.

MR. GERALD DALEY

I was talking to Cathy and George yesterday on this and - you know - I had said that my understanding of this priority question was not that something with priority 1 was necessarily of a greater potential value to the City than something with priority 4. It's just a matter of it's in a more advanced stage, and by that benefit is given the priority 1 because, obviously, you are going to pay more attention to something that you're in the process of completing than you are to something that's in the preliminary stages. (Inaudible first few words - 2 talking) and fast rule. I think it's something that you should keep in mind that a Priority 1 doesn't necessarily mean that it's of greater value than Priority 4.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

I almost feel that the word "priority" is wrong. I don't know what the proper word is.

MS. RACZKA

Mr. Reif and I have come to that conclusion. I tried to emphasize groups in my - if you notice - in my presentation tonight. You didn't notice.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

No, I didn't. I was referring to the fact that Bill Kuehn is on his feet and I wasn't going to let him speak. Go ahead, Bill.

MR. WILLIAM KUEHN

If I may, with the Middlesex County Development Council, we ran into a similar kind of problem in that we've got to create what is known as OEDP, Overall Economic Development Plan, consisting of capital projects for all the communities in the county, and if you start to do them on a priority basis, every First Selectman is going to go screaming and yelling - you know - he wants his first and the next guy - you know - his is no good. So we call them stages 1, 2 and 3. A stage 3 is started from the bottom - working up. Stage 3 was just an idea. Nothing put on paper. Maybe a few rough sketches of a capital project; stage 2 there had been some planning - some preliminary sketches - not yet. It's not developed to the point where you can go out to bid. Stage 1 is essentially all the engineering and planning have been done and within - you know - a month or so it could go out to bid and every four months we have been revising the OEDP for the county just by moving these projects up and out. Maybe this is an approach you want to take. It overcomes that political problem that we had and, now that the Public Works money is coming along through EDA

and the OEDP is an EDA tool for evaluating projects in a labor market area, we found ourselves really having to stick by our Stage 1, 2 and 3 - you know - ways of categorizing projects. While I am here,

CHAIRMAN SHAW
You've got the floor - go ahead.

MR. KUEHN
Thanks. The things that were in the Press relative to the Municipal Development Committee evaluating capital projects was only in relation to that which was felt to be fundable through the Economic Development Administration and the Public Works act of 1976. We were not taking a look at all the capital improvements. We are just trying to figure out which ones could get through the criteria that was established by EDA or what way - it that time - thought the criteria was going to be. Whatever fight the media has established is non-existent. Secondly, it might be advantageous if the Municipal Development Committee did take a look at the Capital Improvements program - sit down as a committee - and whether you want to consider any feedback from them prior to adopting this or -

CHAIRMAN SHAW
Well, I-

MS. RACZKA
There's a spot in our schedule for that, so -

CHAIRMAN SHAW
I'd assume that you would and also all the members of that committee have had copies of this, I believe, isn't that right, Cathy?

MS. RACZKA
Yes.

CHAIRMAN SHAW
So that there should be no problem in doing that. This is what this is for. I would hope that we would react to those.

MR. KUEHN
If you will be kind enough to grant us 'til the end of the month to get through it, I'd appreciate it very much.

CHAIRMAN SHAW
You've got plenty of time, as you know.

MR. KUEHN
O.K.

CHAIRMAN SHAW
You know the statutes.

MR. KUEHN
O.K. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

Thank you. Any other questions or comments by commissioners or others? Go ahead, Gerry.

ADM. ASSISTANT DALEY

I might also mention that the reason I was in to the office yesterday to talk to Cathy and George was the question that was eluded to in the newspaper about the plans for the development of Metro South and specifically Block 15 - the multi-purpose facility and parking facilities that have - that are going to be the subject of a referendum on November 2nd and which are - for which the Council has appropriated money through a bond ordinance. So I am in the process of preparing a - for submission to the Commission - an outline of that proposal as a capital improvements project for the City and I had hoped to get that in prior to the meeting but - this evening, but because of meetings and what-not that I got tied up in this afternoon, I did not get it in a form that I felt was presentable for you but I will - with the assistance of George and Cathy - get that in as soon as possible for your review.

MS. RACZKA

I hope by the Municipal Development Committee looking - dealing with the Capital Improvements Plan again - that if there are any projects where there is more up-to-date financial information or other information along with it, I hope that will get (sounds like "plugged") in at that point.

MR. KUEHN

I didn't give this the thorough review that I gave the first one, Cathy, but I will.

MS. RACZKA

(Inaudible few words) the opportunity to see that it is relevant for the Council.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

Gerry, do you have some concern about a potential low priority number on part of that?

MS. RACZKA

Well, let's -

ADM. ASS'T. DALEY

As I said, my interpretation all along are the -

CHAIRMAN SHAW

I think your interpretation is correct. I am asking you if your concern in public relations sense of having what appears to be a - you know - "low priority" on that.

MS. RACZKA

Maybe we should give them A, B, C & D.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

I think you understand what the process is.

ADM. ASS'T. DALEY

I don't think it's a problem. I think it's a matter of anyone that reads that pamphlet or comes in and talks to Cathy and George for five minutes will understand what the program is, its value. I think it's very logical and I think "priority" is an entirely proper word. I have (inaudible next few words). It's something that - the reason why the new proposal that the sub-committee came up with and that the bond ordinance has been appropriated for - the reason that that's being (inaudible word) because now we have something in form. It's just a matter of filling out the information sheet that every project (inaudible rest of sentence).

MS. RACZKA

I would like to say that we - let's look at the ice skating rink as sort of a case study. I talk about Priority 4 being projects which provide a new facility to the community. An ice skating rink would be a new facility and the comment simply says that an ice skating rink would be a valuable asset to the community. So it's a Priority 4 - but that's certainly is encouragement -

CHAIRMAN SHAAW

Does that make it - more property - a category 4 than a priority 4. A priority - definitely - in my mind -

MS. RACZKA

Sets up an order.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

Sets up an order, and if that comes up as the fourth - of only the fourth magnitude - that someone who is opposed - for instance - actively to this take this document and says "Look, the City says this is only of the fourth order and yet is trying to get us to spend money on it," is that an appropriate place for it? I mean, either it ought to be at the top of the pile or it ought to be under a category which has a definition. I think your descriptions are excellent. I'm just having a struggle with the use of the word "priority". That's all I'm worried about.

MR. REIF

I think we ought to eliminate the word "priority". I think we have that opportunity during the several weeks it will be involved before we adopt this.

COMM. PARISI

I think "Category" is better.

COMM. PASSANESI

Why can't you have more than one choice. In other words, not just one item on number 1. Why can't you have several number ones.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

Well, there are a lot of items under the so-called Priority One, but I am concerned with what that means and I think Cathy's description of what those individual sections mean is great. I

think it doesn't really tell us what order they might appear -
how they might come to the surface. Bill -

MR. KUEHN

We had a slight problem a couple of weeks ago -^{we} hastily put together an application to the National Endowment for the Arts for architectural engineering services for the Russell Library and one of the things we had to address was whether the library expansion was in the capital improvement program so we did pull out the wording from here but we didn't put anything about priority because how can you explain to someone who is trying to quickly review an application in Washington what are all the criteria for each priority?

MR. REIF

It's tenth on Middletown's list.

MR. KUEHN

Yes. You avoid that kind of thing; and there could be PR problems.

MR. SHAW

I think that's what I was reacting to.

MR. REIF

I think the word "priority" -

MR. SHAW

Any other questions or comments? Thank you, Cathy.

COMM. PARISI

Very good job, Cathy.

CHAIRMAN SHAW

I think -the document and its potential use is very good. I am really pleased with the way it has come out. There's no one else here to speak for or against and no other items for the public hearing, so I'll declare the public hearing closed and we'll go on to the executive portion of the meeting.

Eileen Rogers
Eileen B. Rogers
Transcribing Secretary

Ralph Shaw, II, Chairman
Planning & Zoning Commission