

City of Middletown, CT

Economic Development Committee

Minutes from the Meeting of September 10, 2007

<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>	<u>Also Present</u>
G. Daley, Chair		W. Warner
R. Santangelo		
P. Szewczyk		
J. Bibisi		
D. Bauer		R. Kearney
Public: J. Pugliese, T. Davis, J. Kovner, C. Johnson, G. Frick, M. Stone, A. Gaunichaux, S. Evert, and members of the public		

- A **Call to Order:** Szewczyk called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

- B **Public Session:** Gaunichaux represents the American Legion Post 206. Gaunichaux stated the Legion has 100 members and is in dire need of finding space. The Legion has toured the Remington Rand site and contacted Gerald Daley. Veterans from Iraq, Afghanistan and Gulf War and their families need help. Gaunichaux stated he has sent a letter (distributed to the committee) and has talked with Warner. Szewczyk asked if Ford should handle this. Warner stated he waits for a consensus from the committee before involving Ford. Warner questioned how the city would like to proceed. There have been varied requests for space that may conflict with the Reuse Study and the city needs to direct how to proceed. The Water & Sewer project is near completion and a draft of the Remedial Action Plan was received today by DEP with an anticipated cleanup beginning within the year subject to DEP review. The city is in a position to decide where to go from here as questioned by Bauer at the last meeting. Szewczyk noted the Legion use might be similar to the Friendship Hall request for meeting space asking what the Friendship Hall request status. Warner noted the request was tabled by P&Z. Szewczyk suggested condoizing the property. Warner stated a lot of opportunities asking if the Reuse Study recommendations. If the city sells the property but a new owner may not like these uses. Bibisi noted the multipurpose needs requested. Warner noted the need to review uses at the next meeting. Bauer stated there are other dynamics including the upcoming community center and the need for flexible space for civic organizations to use. Bibisi stated support for the Legion noting the Mayor has tried to help the Legion look for space. He has no objection to multipurpose use since there would be no impact on other organizations coming in and the Legion has high ethics. Santangelo agreed noting the history of Baldwin and the agreements the city had to make including the electrical costs. The Legion would be a minimal use and would fix up the space with their own funds and create minimal demand on the building with plans to heat with propane. Fellowship Hall would enhance the space to their needs. Warner noted he is not a commercial real estate agent. Santangelo noted the groups would have evening meetings which would bring people and discourage vandalism and add stability. Warner understands but noted the Reuse Study defined the building as a business incubator. Warner noted the second floor would be the best location but the building does not have an elevator to accommodate people in wheelchairs, which means the first floor is a better location. First floor space

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is prime space for industrial users. Bibisi noted the Legion would generate income to pay for an elevator. Szewczyk noted the needs for large space would bring more income and asked what the plan for the entire building is. Bibisi questioned the viability of manufacturing in the building.

Warner noted he had place item F3 Leasing Criteria for potential tenants on the Agenda to discuss how the city would like to proceed with the building-whether to sell to a buyer or non profit. The income approach would command a sales price of \$1.8 million. Whether to use the building as a civic space or a business center, to retain or sell to a independent development company like INFORM which would not have to go to referendum to raise funds to renovate the building. Current interest is coming from the Legion, USA Wrestling, Circus School, Art Farm and Fellowship Hall.

Daley noted the building is an industrial incubator noting building conditions, and other light demands. Daley recommended working with the Legion in short term only and to work on handicapped access. He recommended considering a short-term solution while they look for a better space. The best use of the building is an industrial use. Gaunichaux stated the Legion transports inured people to convalescent homes and has used the Chamber of Commerce space. Programs are on hold to help the kids of veterans. The Legion is working out of their cars and has transported 30 veterans and note more veterans are coming back home. Do something for the veterans. Daley noted maybe the second floor for light use. Bibisi suggested this is a short-term solution. General discussion about second floor access. Gaunichaux stated they had looked at the backside of the first floor and questioned second floor access for wheelchairs and blind people. The Legion has volunteers, carpenters and people in the county to help along with donations. Daley questioned where Fellowship Hall would be located. Warner stated the first floor where Baldwin was located. Daley questioned the space adjacent to the Baldwin space. Warner stated 5,000 sf, Fellowship Hall 2,500 sf, which P& Z has questions. Santangelo noted EDC did not know that P&Z wanted answers from EDC. Warner stated he usually attends the meetings and answers the questions. Daley questioned elevator access. Warner stated a large elevator would be needed and be placed inside the current freight elevator shaft. Warner noted there is a need for a new sprinkler system. An industrial corporation could raise loan funds. Daley asked if INFORM still existed. Warner replied INFORM existed on paper. Bauer noted things were done to fit into space at Cognichaug High School and the school system has meeting space. Daley noted the Legion needed space everyday for dropins. Gaunichaux noted the Legion needs space to secure files and confidential records. Daley questioned where the Legion was operating. Gaunichaux stated the Legion is working out of their homes and the program is at a standstill and needs to get off the floor to offer family counseling in a private space-the need is bad. The veterans served the Middletown community. They are taken to Newington for medical benefits. Tony from the Legion noted they had met with Roth and Patton at Wesleyan but in the end Wesleyan was not able to help. The Legion has tried everywhere and the Mayor has helped big time. Councilmen and everybody are trying to help. He thanked the committee.

Daley asked Warner to look at other sites and consider how the freight elevator would work for access. Warner stated the elevator is ADA compliant but physically difficult to use. A change of use would require the building to be code compliant. Daley asked the Legion what fee they would be able to pay. Legion stated same as Post 75. Warner stated Post 75 uses the 2,500sf of Sports Hall of Fame building. The Legion agreed to meet next month to discuss the issues further. Warner will research use layouts for the building.

Kovner requested the committee reconsider the executive session for item F1. Daley said the request would be considered when the committee addressed the business.

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C Minutes: Szewczyk corrected the minutes changing bond commission to bond council. Szewczyk made a motion seconded by Bauer to approve the corrected minutes of the 8/13/07 meeting. The committee voted to approve the motion.

D Communications: none

E Old Business

- 1) **CBD Parking**
- 2) **Becky Thatcher Riverboat**
- 3) **DCF Properties: 131 & 155 Wadsworth Street**

F New Business

- 1) **Property Acquisition: City Hall block: EXECUTIVE SESSION: Sec. 1-200 (6)(D)** discussion of the selection of a site or the lease, sale or purchase of real estate by a political subdivision of the state when publicity regarding such site, lease, sale, purchase or construction would cause a likelihood of increased price until such time as all of the property has been acquired or all proceedings or transactions concerning same have been terminated or abandoned.

Davis noted the topic included information about two businesses. Warner stated the FOI required the discussion to be about interest in real estate. The committee asked Davis to stay for the executive session. Szewczyk made a motion seconded by Santangelo to enter executive session. The committee voted to approve the motion and entered into executive session at 6:30 PM. Szewczyk made a motion seconded by Santangelo to exit executive session. The committee voted to approve the motion and entered into executive session at 6:36 PM.

- 2) **Plastic Design International, development on city land between 87 & 111 Industrial Park Road:** Everett stated the company is growing and there is a need to allow people to move safely between the two buildings where there is a drainage swale, owned by the city, by creating a walkway. Bibisi asked what the company would put there. Everett stated lawn. Warner noted the swail is a ditch feeding into the Saw Mill Brook. Everett stated the company would like to clean the swail up by removing asphalt and other debris to clear a way. Szewczyk questioned if the company wanted a right of way. Everett affirmed stating the company would maintain the site. Warner questioned whether the company would connect the buildings. Everett stated the desire to connect would be several years away and the company would come back to the city at a latter date. In the short term, the company would like to establish a pathway upfront and selectively clear. Warner noted this is an open culvert. The company would beautify the swale. Bibisi asked if they would create a space. Everett stated no and that the employees would walk on grass. The need is to clear brush and keep the area open with no bridge or fill. Szewczyk questioned whether Inland Wetlands Commission would be involved. Warner affirmed and stated the Mayor and EDC could offer a license to proceed with the review by the Tree Warden and wetland's staff and Chairman. Bibisi asked how many trees would be removed. Everett stated 10-15 trees and underbrush. Bauer stated he had never been to the site and has no idea of the conditions indicating he was troubled by the asphalt fill and is sympathetic to the issue but does not have enough information to make a decision. Daley questioned who previous owned 87 Industrial Park Road. Kearney stated Mueller Trade Bindery and Data Mail.

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Szewczyk made a motion seconded by Bibisi to ask Warner and the Inland Wetlands staff to review the site and bring forth findings along with a draft license for a right of way onto city property. The committee voted to approve the motion, Bauer voted nay.

Everett invited the committee to visit the company and the site. Bibisi questioned how many people worked for the company. Everett stated 60 people with 3 shifts and the company is growing. By acquiring 87 Industrial Park Road, the company will be able to service larger customers with injection molded plastic products for smoke alarms, oil filters and larger companies like GE. The company will be acquiring additional machinery, which will be on the personal property tax rolls. Kearney stated he and DECD had toured the company last year in anticipation of the expansion and found a very well run company.

3) Remington Rand

a) Leasing Criteria for potential tenants

G Status Reports

- 1) Economic Development Fund, monthly report**
- 2) Economic Development Specialist Report**
- 3) REINVEST Loan Program, monthly summary report**
- 4) JOBS Loan Program, monthly summary report**

H Other

I Adjournment: The committee adjourned at 6:38 PM.