
**CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

MINUTES

September-12-2006

Present

G. DALEY
M. LONG
P. BUSARI
J. MAKROGIANIS
S. BROWN
J. FORTUNA
F. GANGULI
L. RUSSO
S. SHAPIRO
H. NOVICKI
S. GIULIANO (EX OFFICIO)

Absent

R. SANTANGELO
J. INGLIS
J. TINE
J. ALEXANDER

Also Present

M. WACKERS
L. BREWSTER
R. ROSENTHAL
D. BERTO
I. GREENBERG
M. TAYLOR
J. SARBAUGH
FRANK KUAN
JOSH KOVNER

Gerald Daley called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

Gerald Daley moved to review the minutes from the previous meeting. Steven Shapiro motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Hank Novicki seconded and the motion was approved with nine in favor of the motion and one abstention.

Gerald Daley opened the floor to public comments.

Lydia Brewster representing the North End Action Team reiterated that homeownership is an important component to this project, and should be funded as quickly as possible. The Richman project will not turn the neighborhood around by itself and needs the homeownership to be developed in conjunction. We need to make sure we finish the job.

Gerald Daley seeing no more public comments called on Broad Park to deliver an update on their project.

David Berto of Broad Park Development Corporation stated that they have a plan to move forward, but the first application was not funded by the Department of Economic and Community Development. There were two reasons for not receiving funding and they are the lack of site control of the project area and a lack of a comprehensive relocation plan.

Gerald Daley asked if Board Park had experience with renovation and rehab work. David Berto replied that Broad Park has a substantial amount of experience in Hartford working with structures to maintain their architectural character. Rehab is not always the solution and not all buildings are worth saving. The architect on the project has experience with preservation. David Berto added that Brian Kronenberger has been invited to participate in the walk through with the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust. There is a strong fabric of preservation in all those involved in this project.

Gerald Daley encouraged David Berto to work with Brian Kronenberger.

Peggy Busari commented that the Agency should try back Broad Park to create a better community. The City will benefit from this homeownership development.

Hank Novicki added that we should be focusing on doing something for the people.

Gerald Daley stated that we have made a lot of progress in July in bridge the gap between the preservationist and housing interests. This investigation into rehab versus new construction will give the public and the agency information to make a positive decision. This month the City and Broad Park will be meeting with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development to allow everyone to know what the actual hurdles are to receiving funding.

Mayor Sebastian Giuliano commented that he would have been happy to homeownership portion of the project move first, but he has his doubts with a rental first project. If there is no homeownership then the project will have its failures. Everyone is on the same page, but we have to deal with the criticism and move forward with everyone behind it. The Richman project is perceived to have happened behind closed doors. The Agency needs to educate the public.

Gerald Daley stated that the Richman project approval process was public with large participation. The rental component when first because the funding was in place. There was plenty of discussion and disagreement, and the Agency did its best to reach a consensus. The first consideration for the Agency are the people not the buildings. Gerald Daley asked Bill Warner where Broad Park stands with the Developers Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Bill Warner stated that the MOU deadline for due diligence ended on August 31, 2006. The City's Common Council has 60 days to approve Broad Park's Plan.

John Makrogianis motioned to approve the first phase of fourteen units of the conceptual plan, and send it to the Common Council for approval. Steven Shapiro seconded.

Gerald Daley began discussion of the motion by determining that the Greater Middletown Preservation Trust and Broad Park could move independently of the approval process since the distinction between rehab and new construction does not affect the concept. The Agency expects a report in October.

Lydia Brewster asked if the City will be actively supporting the project?

The Mayor replied that he would like to hear first the conclusions from the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development meeting.

Gerald Daley added that the project is in a "Catch 22", where we need funding to get site control, but can not get site control without funding. If we can get the sellers to agree to refundable deposits then we can use federal funds that we have available. Furthermore there are two properties that have been boarded up by the Health Department.

Jackie Williams from Sterling Realty added that they have been working hard for two years with the sellers and the sellers are losing patience. It would cost a minimum of \$5,000 per property in deposits to get preliminary site control.

Gerald Daley asked David Berto when the next funding round would begin?

David Berto replied that the new round would be likely announced in October or November, with applications due within six to eight weeks. Once an award is announced Broad Park could go to a Bank to borrow the funding until it is released from DECD.

Michael Long asked how does the City show support?

David Berto replied that City representation at the DECD meeting would be a start and letters of support from the Mayor when Broad Park submits an application.

Gerald Daley called for a vote on the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Gerald Daley called on William Warner to present the next item on the Agenda, the proposed Baer and Dunham Redevelopment Plan.

William Warners stated that redevelopment was created to deal with slum and blight and there are currently six area in the City where conditions exist were the Agency are actively involved in dealing with slum and blight or may have to in the future. The six areas are Miller and Bridge Street, Portland Street, Hillside Avenue, and Highlands in Westlake and Baer and Dunham Street. Baer and Dunham is a neighborhood that is trapped by surrounding retail. One way to deal with blight is redevelopment control. This tool allows for development and controls speculation. Staff are bringing this to the Redevelopment Agency to gauge their interested in investigating the possibility for creating a new redevelopment plan to address the issues in and around Baer and Dunham.

Gerald Daley asked what would replace the existing structures?

William Warner replied that retail would be most likely. First a plan would be adopted and then the City would select a developer who would pay for acquisition, environmental and relocation.

Stephen Shapiro stated that notice should be sent to the homeowners and property owners.

Jackie Williams summarized the history of negotiation with this area.

Steven Shapiro motioned to process and develop a draft plan and notify the owners. Louise Russo seconded and the motion was approved unanimously.

Gerald Daley moved to the next item on the agenda and Michiel Wackers gave an update on the Miller Bridge Redevelopment Plan. Currently there is less than \$100,000 to carry out the project.

Hank Novicki asked if the State could acquire the properties.

John Makrogianis asked if a referendum should be held to secure the final funding. William Warner replied that that would be a tough sell.

Gerald Daley moved to the next item and Bill Warner gave a brief update on the Richman project since Pam Mikusova could not attended.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM, upon a motion from John Makrogianis and seconded by Jim Fortuna.

Respectfully submitted,

Michiel Wackers, Deputy Director of Planning, Conservation and Development