

City of Middletown, CT

Economic Development Committee

Approved Minutes from the Economic Development Committee Meeting of October 12, 2010

Present: G. Daley, R. Santangelo, J. Bibisi, D. Bauer, V. Loffredo, W. Warner, R. Kearney, T. Hartley

Public: M. Fraulino, C. Johnson, E. McKeon, M. Dowley, J. Alexander, J. Hall, B. Emery & members of the public
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Minutes

- A Call to Order: Santangelo called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

- B Public Session: Fraulino read the letter from the Central Business Bureau regarding a motion to support the change of parking rates and that there is no strong consensus on where a new parking garage should be built. Hall stated the Jonah Center had created awareness of issues in the design of the Melilli Parking lot including: removal of trees; storm water treatment which was installed; and delaying design until the hiring of a parking director. Hall noted the connection and relationship between Main Street and the river which needs to be addressed in the planning for a garage. Hall noted the plans for a pedestrian walkway over Route 9.

Emery seconded Hall's comments. Emery stated the high cost of parking is being subsidized by all taxpayers-even those who walk, bike or bus and do not drive and stated vanity places should cost at least \$150. Emery stated the cruising for a parking space increased pollution, congestion and health issues which are costs which need to be considered in setting rates. Emery stated the need to consider a portion of funds collected at meters in neighborhoods be set aside for neighborhood maintenance and streetscape improvements.

Alexander stated parking rates are set to pay for improvements to parking. Parking must raise \$450,000 to pay the General Fund before any improvements can be paid for.

- C Minutes
 - 1) September 13, 2010 Meeting Minutes: Bibisi made a motion seconded by Santangelo to approve the minutes of 9/13/10. The committee voted to approve the minutes, Loffredo abstained, Bauer stated he read the minutes.

- D Communications

- E New Business
 - 1) Westfield Fire-Land Purchase-Middle Street: Dowley stated Westfield residents need a fire station. Access to the area from East Street requires a difficult crossing into Cromwell. Dowley presented a site plan showing land to acquire for a fire sub station on Middle Street was presented to the committee. Dowley stated 3 Westfield Fire Commissioners were present to answer any questions.

- Santangelo questioned where the location of the site. Bibisi replied at land owned by the city on Bysiewicz Drive. Bauer asked for a history of the acquisition of the land by the city. Warner stated the land was part of the agreement option when the city was fighting to keep the Army out of the site and directed to Cucia Park site. Bauer asked for a time line of the process and who chose or picked the lot for the city. Warner stated the lot was proposed to the city. Bauer stated the public needs to know how the city operates and the process. Daley stated the lot was identified before the option. Warner stated the lot has frontage which was not needed. Warner noted the mayor, Bibisi and members of the Westfield Fire met to discuss the site. Loffredo asked what the impact on the remaining portion of the lot would be once a portion was removed for the fire substation. Warner noted the steep grade of the lot on the site plan. Loffredo asked if the site has water & sewer service. Warner affirmed. Bauer stated he remembered the resolution but there was no map attached (which he would have remembered). Warner stated the lot was not known when the resolution was approved and was conditional upon the Army's site choice. Santangelo stated the lot decision was based upon which lots NORPACO chose. Daley noted the lot was the least desirable for industrial usage. Bauer stated the need to know how the city works noting the city paid full retail for the lot. Warner stated the city would retain the best part of the lot and there are two companies considering the site. Bibisi noted the public safety issue and danger. Warner noted the access problems if Smith and Country Club Road were blocked. Daley stated the price was established when NORPACO paid \$143,000 per acre divided by $\frac{3}{4}$. Warner stated the city paid half equaling \$120,000 divided by 2 equaling \$60,000 from the city. Loffredo asked how big the fire substation would be. One off the commissioners stated the facility would be 2 bays with facilities for firefighters. Loffredo questioned the location. The location is a midpoint in the area and there is no place to put this due to the preponderance of homes in the area. The building would be 3,600 square feet, site costs would be to move earth not rock, there is no estimate of the costs, the project would be in the future. Daley stated the proposal would be for Westfield Fire to get the land with a 50% discount. The site is next to the Yellow Freight driveway. Loffredo made a motion seconded by Bibisi to send a positive recommendation to the Common Council for the sale for \$60,000 of the $\frac{3}{4}$ acre site to Westfield Fire. The committee voted to approve the motion, Bauer voted nay. Bauer stated it is important to question was this the best the city could do in development and noted somebody knew to pick this site. Daley stated NORPACO decided first and Bysiewicz retained the easiest to develop lots noting the city still has 2+ acres of industrial land. Warner noted having fire station nearby makes an area more attractive and reduces insurance costs. Warner noted the agreement called for the city to purchase three lots if NORPACO did not come and only one lot if NORPACO moved to the city. Bauer questioned why the city paid full retail. Daley stated the city paid market value of \$143,000 per acre and this proposal would divide $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre recouping \$60,000 of the acquisition costs which makes economic development sense. Loffredo noted the public safety and EMT issues along with the enhancement effect upon taxable property and the city's investment in the area over time.
- 2) Jonah Center Grant: Hall stated the Jonah Center had achieved \$100,200 in grants and \$25,000 in donations and earned income of \$10,000. Additional accomplishments include saving the city money by arranging for buying power for the city and the Honeywell contract. Hall discussed the Green Business Initiative to assist businesses. Hall stated the Jonah Center was asking for the final installment of \$6,250 from the \$25,000 grant. Bauer noted the final $\frac{1}{4}$ of the grant. Hall affirmed the funds were for the grant writer. Bauer made a motion seconded by Loffredo to recommend releasing the final \$6,250 of the \$25,000 grant to the Jonah Center. Daley noted the accomplishment of spending \$19,000 to gain over \$100,000 in grants. Discussion of Green Business Initiative. Loffredo questioned if Hall had an action plan on the initiative. Hall affirmed

and agreed to bring this back to the committee. Warner noted a resolution was not needed only permission from the committee to release the funds.

- 3) Aetna Property-Glenn Russo: Warner stated Russo had a scheduling conflict.
- 4) *Parking Department: Warner reviewed the information to increase the street parking rates to \$1.00 per hour and the parking lot rates to \$.75 per hour to encourage people to park cars in the parking lots. Additionally, monthly rates would increase from \$55 to \$65 and then to \$75 next year. Harley discussed vanity rates. Loffredo made a motion seconded by Bibisi to recommend to the Common Council the increase of on street parking meter rates to \$1.00 per hour and off street parking lots to \$.75 per hour. And to increase all monthly parking permits for the arcade tat \$65 per moth for the first year and then \$75 per month in the following year. The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.
 - a. *Garage Location
 - b. *Parking Rates

F Status Reports

- 1) Economic Development Fund, 9/30/10
- 2) Middletown Statistics Report, 9/10
- 3) Future Economic Development Projects report
- 4) Economic Development Specialist Report
- 5) REINVEST Loan Program, monthly summary report
- 6) JOBS Loan Program, monthly summary report

G Other

H Adjournment: The committee adjourned at 6:55 PM