
**CITY OF MIDDLETOWN
CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES

24 - November - 2003

Present

L. WALLACE , CHAIR
S. ENGLEHARDT, VICE-CHAIR
V. AMATO
L. CADITZ-PECK
B. PLUM
E. ROBERTS
A. MARINO
D. MITKOSKI
R. BANTUM
A. KELLEY
E. BOGDAN
H. HENRY
J. ROBINSON

Absent

M. DIMON

Also Present

M. WACKERS
W. WARNER
P. CACCIOLA
M. FLINTER
F. KUAN
S. PRECOURT
B. SIMON
J. MILARDO
A. MEYERS

L. Wallace called the public hearing to order at 5:00 PM.

L. Wallace moved that the minutes from the October and September meetings be approved. See no opposition the October and September meeting minutes were approved

There being no Old Business L. Wallace continued and opened the floor to New Business.

The first presentation by John Milardo of the City's Park and Recreational Department and Phil Cacciola, the City's ADA Coordinator, represented a proposal for a study to examine possible remedies for accessibility to Pat Kidney Field. P. Cacciola explained that the City has received a formal complaint about the inaccessible nature of Pat Kidney Field and that steps should be made to limit the City's liability and correct the problems. A study would be a good first step. L. Wallace asked, why study the problem, when you can request funds to fix the problems you already know? P. Cacciola replied that a comprehensive study needs to be done in order for the City to adequately address the needs of making this field accessible. S. Englehardt stated that the Middle School will be moving to that area and would it not become the responsibility of the Board of Education to find funding for such a project. V. Amato stated that he would rather see that the job be done as opposed to CDBG funds used for studying the problem.

The second presentation by John Milardo of the City's Park and Recreational Department and Phil Cacciola, the City's ADA Coordinator, represented a proposal for a study to examine possible remedies for accessibility to Palmer Field. P. Cacciola also saw a need to limited the City's liability at Palmer Field, since it has been successful at hosting various events, and the present condition of the stadium in not friendly to those with disabilities. A study would be a good first step in this case as well. E. Roberts stated that he is a supporter of the proposal, but if we need this to be done it should not be in the form of a study but actually implement solutions. A better route to go would be to putting together an RFP. H. Henry stated I am troubled by the amount of money it takes to do a study when we know the problem exists. S. Englehardt asked is Palmer field is used by outside groups and do they pay a fee? P. Cacciola replied that out-of-town groups pay fees, and the City collects roughly \$9,000 per year. In-town groups pay no fees. J. Robinson replied that I would rather see real work being done. I like to see results.

The third presentation by Arthur Meyers, Director of the Russell Library, represented a proposal for an expansion to the Russell Library to remedy handicap accessibility issues. Provide handicapped accessibility

in the Children's Room. S. Englehardt, how do you get your studies done? A. Meyers replied that the Library asked for "gratis" service from architects or engineers with the likelihood that they will win the contract. E. Roberts asked you are asking for \$89,000, but your total project cost more? A. Meyers replied, yes, we know that the City's CDBG funds are limited, and we have plans to secure the rest of those funds.

The fourth presentation by Scott Precourt, Operations Manager of HOME Inc of Equity In Housing in Middletown, represented a request for rehabilitation funds to correct problems with a roof. Equity in Housing of Middletown, Inc. is a 24-year old affordable housing cooperative development consisting of thirty-seven apartments in 14 buildings; the average income of Equity's residents was approximately 32% of AMI at the time of move-in. This request is for the replacement of nine heating systems and four roof structures in four buildings used for low and extremely low-income residents in the North End of Middletown. E. Roberts what is the life span of the items you are replacing? S. Precourt replied that the heating systems they are looking at have a lifespan of 20-30 years and the roof has the same lifespan. E. Roberts asked if this project could be paid out of rental income? S. Precourt replied that funding sources, specifically state and federal request such groups as Gilead to more and more with less and less funding. Rental income is already spread thin that is would be very difficult on our tenants if we were to pay for such a project with rental income. J. Robinson asked do you have a capital budget? S. Precourt replied, yes we do have a capital budget but it has been used for other needed repairs. The Board does not want to raise the funds through a rental increase.

The fifth presentation by Frank Kuan, Community Relations Director for Wesleyan University, represented a request for funds to install a sprinkler system at the Green Street Arts Center. Wesleyan University seeks funding to renovate the Green Street School in the North End of Middletown to house a new community arts center. The center will act as a cultural and educational resource for community residents of all ages, particularly for children and for low- and moderate-income residents in the North End. Frank Kuan explained that a new director will likely be coming on Board for the Green Street Arts Center. We are waiting for an acceptance, before we can reveal who it is, but he will be a valuable asset for the City of Middletown. J. Robinson asked where does the project stand in raising funds? F. Kuan replied that Wesleyan University has been successful in raising \$800,000 for the project, this includes \$500,000 anonymous donation from a Wesleyan alumni and \$100,000 in HUD appropriation secured by Representative Rosa Delauro. J. Robinson asked if this is the last request you will be making? F. Kuan replied, yes, with a caveat that there is no budget for exterior alterations and landscaping. Until the North End redevelopment plan is finalized an implemented, Wesleyan does not know what it can do with the outside of the building.

The sixth presentation by Margaret Flinter, VP/Clinical Director of the Community Health Center, represented a request for funds to renovate the entrance to the Community Health Center facility at 635 Main Street. CHC, Inc. requests funds to significantly improved access to its medical building for the physically challenged, including the elderly, parents with strollers, and those who are wheelchair bound. This project also includes badly needed renovations to the patient waiting, intake, registration, and medical records area, which have not been altered in fourteen years. Water damage to the ceiling requires immediate replacement. M. Flinter reported that 120 handicapped people visit each day and perhaps 15% of the clients are mothers with strollers. L. Wallace asked of the \$20,000 allocated to the Community Health Center for this project, what did it pay for. M. Flinter replied that the total project costs \$76,000 to complete, so the Community Health Center needs more funds in order to finish the project. V. Amato asked the Community Health Center is resource for residents of other towns, how much has been requested from other towns. M. Flinter replied that requests are made each year, but none have provided any funds.

The seventh presentation by Barry Simon, Executive Director of Gilead Community Services, represented a proposal for a roof replacement at Gilead Group Home. Founded in 1968, Gilead Community Services provides housing, case management, rehabilitation, and psychiatric care to individuals with severe and persistent mental illness residing in Middlesex County. This request is for funding to replace the roof at Gilead II, a group home owned and operated by Gilead Community Services at 436 Washington Street in Middletown. Gilead II is a residence for eight individuals with severe psychiatric disabilities who require 24-hour supervision and support services. While programming is funded through a contract with the CT State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, capital projects such as roof replacement cannot be funded through the same contract. V. Amato asked if this system is more complex than a simple

fire detector in a residential home? B. Simmons replied that this would be an address fire detection system, which could signal the fire department if fire occurs. V. Amato asked is this type of system common for group homes? B. Simmons replied that this is a common safety feature. V. Amato asked if this will only benefit Middletown residents? B. Simons replied yes, only Middletown residents will benefit.

The eighth presentation by Barry Simon, Executive Director of Gilead Community Services, represented a proposal install a fire alarm system at the Gilead apartment facility. Founded in 1968, Gilead Community Services provides housing, case management, rehabilitation, and psychiatric care to individuals with severe and persistent mental illness residing in Middlesex County. This request is for funding to install a hard-wire fire detection and notification system at the Gilead Apartment Program, a facility that serves as a home for five individuals and the central site for services to an additional eleven clients living in nearby apartments. The GAP facility is located at 170-172 Liberty Street in Middletown. While programming is funded through a contract with the CT State Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, capital projects such as roof replacement cannot be funded through the same contract.

The ninth presentation by William Warner, Director of Planning, Conservation and Development, represented a proposal to upgrade the water and sewer lines at the city owned Remington Rand site. This is a request for funding leading to the rehabilitation of the 184,000 square foot Remington Rand manufacturing complex. This facility is located in a low- and moderate-income census tract and will be a significant job generator in the city's Northend. The building will have four major tenants in excess of 15,000 sq. ft. and the remainder of the space will be used for small businesses in an incubator arrangement. The city has received \$1.5 million for environmental remediation and \$756,000 for building rehabilitation. The city must provide \$756,000 in matching funds. The \$200,000 in block grant dollars will be used in the fall for sanitary sewer construction and handicapped access to the second floor. The remainder of the matching dollars will come from building rent receipts. L. Wallace asked how many businesses exist now? W. Warner replied twelve businesses exist now. L. Wallace asked what are they doing for water? W. Warner replied water is sufficient for domestic use such as toilets and sinks, but the for businesses that are dependent on water, cannot consider this site. The City currently has a tofu maker that would like to relocate to the Remington Rand building, but cannot until the water system is upgraded. L. Caditz-Peck asked if the same deal previously described with Kidcity is still under consideration. W. Warner replied that I don't want to give Kidcity the money anymore than you do, and I have not been contacted by Kidcity recently for the funds. D. Mitikoski asked what does Midfield do? W. Warner replied that Midfield manages the build for the city of Middletown. A. Marino asked since the total number of requests is around \$300,000 and only \$100,000 in funds are available, we can't give everyone everything, what would happen if Remington Rand does not receive all the funding they request? W. Warner replied that the projects eing discussed would be delayed, which would in turn delay job creation in the North End. L. Caditz-Peck asked what the employment rate for Middletown is? W. Warner replied that for the City the level is 5%, but for the North End he believes that that number is around 10%-15%. V. Amato asked if these job would go to Middletown residents? W. Warner replied that these would go to Middletown residents in large part because they are not high paying jobs, but because there is a pool of people in the area that are suited for these types of jobs. M. Wackers added that the City has leeway to ensure that these jobs are offered first to low- and moderate-income residents. If a business can not prove that is did provide these jobs first to city residents then those companies will have broken their contract and could be required to refund the funds they received.

Last item on the agenda was for the contract extension the Middletown Housing Authority. M. Wackers explained that the Middletown Housing Authority Senior Center rehabilitation project is nearly complete and over 70% of their funds have be used, but due to a delay in a shipment they need an extra month to complete the project. V. Amato motioned to approve the contract extension. S. Englehardt seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 7:00 pm, upon a motion by.

Respectfully submitted,

Michiel Wackers
Community Development Specialist