

City of Middletown, CT

Economic Development Committee

Minutes from the meeting of December 12, 2005

<u>Present</u>	<u>Also Present</u>
G. Daley, Chair	W. Warner
J. Bibisi	R. Kearney, EDS
V. James Russo	G. Russo
R. Santangelo	E. Roberts
P. Szewczyk	
Public: D. Picket, Glenn Russo, Carta, G. Keithan, M. DiScala, A. Webber, L. Phillips, M. Krupinski, H. Murphy, D. Champiney	

- A Call to Order:** Daley called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.
- B Public Session:** Roberts questioned whether the \$125/acre lease cost to Millane v/s the loss of Pilot funding that the city cannot afford to lose. Roberts questioned whether Gail Hamm would introduce State legislation to allow the sale of the 4 houses to bring them onto the tax roles and split the proceeds to purchase open space.
- C Minutes:** Bibisi made a motion seconded by Daley to approve the September 12, 2005 and the October 11, 2005 minutes. Bibisi, Daley and Santangelo approved the motion with Santangelo abstaining from approving the October 11, 2005 minutes.
- D Communications:** none
- E Old Business**
- 1) **CBB Parking**
- a) **\$18 million Federal Funding:** General discussion of creating a plan and adopting a accessible process for spending the funding. Szewczyk questioned how the preferred developer entered into this issue. Santangelo discussed the need to address traffic flow into an old New England town. Warner stated the plan must be saleable to DOT and the Federal Highway Administration. Warner suggested that an RFP for a professional downtown traffic study be made. Bibisi questioned whether Midstate Regional Planning would be able to do the work. Santangelo stated the city does not have a traffic engineer. Warner stated that the study is reimbursable.

Bibisi made a motion seconded by Szewczyk for staff to prepare an RFP for downtown traffic study to be reviewed at the next EDC meeting. The committee voted to approve the motion.

- 2) **Harbor Park Restaurant, option to extend lease** EXECUTIVE SESSION- 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, exempt from disclosure under Section 1-200(6)(D) of the Connecticut General Statutes. Szewczyk made a motion seconded by Bibisi to enter Executive Session. The committee voted to approve the motion. Szewczyk made a motion seconded by Santangelo to exit Executive Session at 7:48 PM. The committee voted to approve the motion.
- 3) **Downtown Redevelopment** EXECUTIVE SESSION- 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, exempt from disclosure under Section 1-200(6)(D) of the Connecticut General Statutes. This item was discussed in the Executive Session described in E2.
- 4) **Lot 21 Middle Street/corner of Timber Ridge** EXECUTIVE SESSION- 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, exempt from disclosure under Section 1-200(6)(D) of the Connecticut General Statutes. The committee did not enter into Executive Session for this item.
 - a) **Consulting Engineering Services:** Keithan introduced the company and plans to combine the parcels to create a better parking for his growing company. Keithan described the wetlands issues. Daley asked if Keithan was proposing to build a bridge for access. Keithan stated there is a swale and he wants to make the property look sharp. Bibisi questioned if the wetlands would stay as they are. Keithan affirmed and stated the parking would move to make way for an addition to the building.
 - b) **Delta Building Corporation:** did not attend
 - c) **M. F. DiScala & Co., Inc.:** DiScala introduced his company as owners of the Millennium Business Park at 699 Middle Street and the plans to extend Kenneth Dooley Drive to create 6 industrial lots for smaller users and the lots would be for sale. DiScala described plans for Lot 21 site to create an upscale flex building with units of 3-5,000 square feet with loading access in the rear of an “L” shaped building. DiScala stated he would look to mitigate wetlands at the 699 Middle Street site. DiScala stated he would build the building when he received approval. DiScala described market demand for 100-200,000 square foot buildings and the need to create buildable lots. Warner affirmed the need and the current demand from companies that like Middletown and want to locate here. DiScala presented drawings of the approved 100,000 square foot building. Bibisi asked where the truck bays would be. DiScala presented a sketch showing the bays on the west side of the building.
- 5) **Lease of city land to Millane’s Nursery:** General discussion ensued.

Szewczyk made a motion seconded by Bibisi to send a resolution requiring best management practices as a technical change to the resolution. The committee voted to approve the motion.

F New Business

- 1) **Industrial Park Road Area Internet Access:** Krupinski updated the committee on the progress of the project and requested that Timber Ridge Road be added to the project area since several businesses on Timber Ridge would like to have the service. Daley questioned if \$12,000 was the balance left. Krupinski confirmed.

Warner described the program of Comcast bringing access to the area at their expense and the city offering grants of up to \$1,000 for the first 20 businesses that connect to Comcast Internet. Warner reviewed the Comcast Cable Invoice dated 10/5/05 and the attached spreadsheet describing the 9 companies that had Internet access installed, the construction costs and the city grant contributions. The grant funds will be paid directly to Comcast to reimburse Comcast for the grant portion of the construction and installation of service.

Szewczyk questioned whether there are surrounding areas, Smith Street that need service. Krupinski stated that Jaffee, Smith Street Business Park, had worked directly with Comcast when he acquired the building. G. Russo stated his offices at Roscommon Drive a 80,000 square foot building had to work with SBC DSL which was nearly out of copper line. G. Russo stated that Comcast does not service the building and asked that Comcast revisit the building and meet with Celeste Marcellino, building manager. Warner stated the decision to work with Comcast was up to Flatley and the SBC was approached but was not interested in the project when the city agreed to work with Comcast. Daley stated that it would be up to Flatley to decide whether they want to participate, but the building is in the project area. Carta questioned why the city was giving businesses with \$1,000 subsidy when these companies could be contracting with satellite Internet providers for \$99 per month. General discussion ensued about the quality of satellite internet service.

Santangelo made a motion seconded by Szewczyk to include Timber Ridge Road into the project area to be funded by the previously encumbered project funds. The committee voted to approve the motion.

Daley stated that the project was requested by taxpayers in the project area and would expand the tax base. Szewczyk stated that satellite service depended on orientation. Warner stated satellite did not offer the speed needed. V. James Russo asked for an explanation of who was paying for the extension of service as noted on the Comcast invoice. Krupinski stated that Comcast was paying for the extension. The business and or city reimbursement is paying only for the connection from the street to the business.

- 2) **North End Market Rate Housing Developers:** Murphy & Champiney introduced themselves as developers interested in purchasing the Little Tibet building and creating market rate housing in the North End. They described their business, discussed projects they had done in the Mass. Area. They are very excited about Middletown and felt the city was heading in the direction of Northampton, MA. Daley questioned what the housing was like above Little Tibet. They stated that there are 12-I and 2 bedroom apartments. They are interested in creating single homeownership upscale condos and stated that Little Tibet is a very good tenant. Bibisi asked where they were finding financing. They responded that banks were very receptive to their plans and the November 2005 Yankee Magazine article showed a picture of the building. Daley recommended the developers meet with Warner to discuss homeownership and the Ferry Street project and Broad Park's plans. They discussed interest in other buildings and that they had worked with John Mullin, UMASS. The developers were invited back for further discussions once they had met with Warner.

- 3) **Jonah Center-Boat launch access:** Santangelo stated the proposed access road would need to be at least 18' wide and question whether this would be a city road needing city maintenance and snow plowing. Traffic Commission and Public Safety must review the project.

Szewczyk made a motion seconded by Santangelo to approve the concept with a final review once the appropriate commissions reviewed the project to determine the impact on the Remington Rand building. The committee voted to approve the motion.

- 4) **Proposed Wetlands Regulations:** Warner described the proposed changes as doubling the jurisdiction of the agency. Warner expressed concern over the processing of small projects like sheds, pools and decks. Szewczyk asked why the regulations would change and the effect on development projects. Warner stated the Public hearing would be January 4, 2006. Carta stated there would be a special Meeting in mid January for the Public Hearing. Szewczyk commented that the language was all-inclusive. Daley stated the impact of the proposed regulations would detract for getting timely project approval. Carta stated that staff had formerly had administrative approval power. Warner stated that staff approval still required advertising and a 30 day waiting period.

- 5) **299 Timber Ridge Road:** General discussion ensued.

Szewczyk made a motion seconded by Bibisi to return the fees. The committee voted to approve the motion

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:** Bibisi mentioned that the Bow Lane property is vacant and the Reservoir Road property tenants understand the notice to leave, which is postponed until after the holidays. Bibisi questioned if the State Legislature could amend the public act and asked Warner to research this. Warner stated the conditions of the Wadsworth Street properties are poor but would fetch \$175,000 in today's market. V. James Russo commented on Long Lane and the property as open space owed to the city. Szewczyk affirmed the open space discussion.

- I Adjournment:** Szewczyk made a motion seconded by Santangelo to adjourn at 7:49 PM. The committee approved the motion.