

Economic Development Committee
Minutes: December 12, 1994

Present:

G. Daley, Chair
Stannard, *Press*
J. Milardo
R. Santangelo
S. Shapiro (7:12)

Absent:

N. Conaway-Raczka

Also Present:

C.
W. Daley, *Courant*
E. Roberts
W. Kuehn, staff
C. Wilcox, staff
L. Ozga, staff (8:00)

Chairman Daley called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. in Room 208 of the Municipal Building.

Public Forum: No one from the public wished to speak

Minutes: Minutes of November 14th and October 11th were considered for approval. A motion was made by J. Milardo, seconded by R. Santangelo and voted unanimously to amend the minutes of October 1, 1994, p. 3, to change the words "consider making" to "consider designating". Upon a motion by R. Santangelo, seconded by J. Milardo, the minutes were accepted unanimously, as amended.

Twin Vane Industrial Park: W. Kuehn reported that this industrial subdivision approval was going to expire on January 24, 1995. The City has an interest in this parcel, and needs to extend the permit. A motion was made by R. Santangelo, seconded by J. Milardo to request of the Planning & Zoning commission an extension of the subdivision approval for two years, or whatever the maximum time allowable by statute; all voted in favor, except S. Shapiro, who abstained as a member of the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Downtown Manager's Report: W. Kuehn pointed out all the written materials in the packet, and reported they were shooting for a Council workshop toward the end of January. Tim Lynch is drafting the Downtown District ordinance for the Common Council and the Advisory Board.

S. Shapiro pointed out some inaccuracies in the property owner list, and suggested J.L. Pizzaro go over it with the Town Clerk's office. Examples were the Pacific Marble, and all Nick Saraceno properties, among others.

Economic Development Fund: W. Kuehn handed out a balance sheet for the fund showing \$2,900 in disbursements, income from Harborpark and REINVEST, and a balance of \$11,000 +/-.

North End Industrial Area: G. Daley gave an update of a meeting with the Mayor, the St. John's Building Committee, DOT and DED on December 1, 1994 the result of which is the acknowledgement that traffic in the area leaves a lot to be desired. The DED

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representative said the Industrial area project would have very little impact on the Church/School area and that nothing would be improved until DOT came along with a viable solution to the Route 9 intersections. DOT made it very clear that there was no active project in the works. The Committee directed W. Kuehn, working with DED and DOT, to put something forward and make a recommendation for EDC. They emphasized the need to make a proper solution, regardless of costs; and urged legislators and City fathers to push for this; reminding them that Middletown is in the center of the State, and on a tourism route. The new DOT commissioner should be contacted to get this on their list of priorities, and G. Daley will be going to a Midstate Regional Planning Agency meeting on their transportation plan. The Committee agreed that this was a State problem, and their responsibility to correct. J. Milardo pointed out there were only a limited number of bridges crossing the river and felt Middletown deserved some of the large amount of funds now going into the Charter Oak, Putnam and Baldwin Bridges and their approaches. He felt the funds were a small amount to spend to clean up a dangerous situation and improve commerce as well... better than wasting money to blast rocks from the median at Exit 3. G. Daley indicated the need for more assistance in moving the playground to alleviate potential dangers and, perhaps, find more land. W. Kuehn said the North End Industrial Area would not generate much additional truck traffic but agreed the playground was a problem. J. Milardo said he was prepared to talk to the Governor's office, to get a group meeting with the DOT Commissioner, and to sell him on the economic development, health, and general welfare, citing this as a high pollution area, tourism benefits, and relatively low cost compared to improvements at other crossings. The Committee discussed this further indicating the need to contact the new DED commissioner as well, to have something on the Midstate Regional Planning Agency's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) in May or June, and taking the lead in getting the State to address this issue to the satisfaction of the City - whatever that solution may be.

Meeting Schedule: Upon a motion by S. Shapiro, seconded by J. Milardo, the Committee voted unanimously to change their regularly scheduled meeting from the second Monday to the third Monday of each month at 7::00 p.m.

Armory Project: L. Ozga handed out a memo regarding the Armory Project and indicated that she was concerned about how and where the \$150,000 CDBG allocation would be spent, as well as the development schedule and meeting deadlines. She was looking for an RFP for architectural/engineering services and handed out a report from Joshua Freeman dated December 2, 1994. She pointed out that this project was no longer under the aegis of the Redevelopment Agency, the City owns and maintains the building at some cost, and it is not clear who is in charge of oversight. J. Milardo said he agreed entirely; that policy decisions needed to be made; that the City had not adopted the current plan; and, that it was not fair to either the City or the developer to leave this "in Limbo". The Committee suggested holding a community workshop, at which all projects facing the City will be discussed - both social and infrastructure. J. Milardo felt there may be conflict with the Armory and Long Hill Estate, and the City needs to work things out between projects. L. Ozga reiterated the need for a time frame, project cost estimate, and other sources of income beyond the City. CDBG is paying for the feasibility study but questions remain such as who will own the building? what will it be? can it support itself? S. Shapiro replied

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that even before all this, the City must make a decision ... the Council must act in order to give guidance to staff, to the developer and to the taxpayers ... then transfer the property. J. Milardo said the issue to discuss is whether the Arts is a City function, and if so, it should pay for it. The level of commitment and cost should be exposed to a public forum, then the Council should vote on it. The EDC recommended pulling together the Cultural Center proposal by the February meeting.

Ice Skating Rink: L. Ozga passed out a memo which indicated that an ice skating rink at Donovan Park, off Spring Street, was doable and affordable. Park & Rec can build it, and she would expect to solicit volunteers to staff it. The materials are reusable, so it can be reconstructed every year. R. Santangelo thought it was a good idea, especially for the North End, as did the other members; however, beyond funding this from the Economic Development Fund, they felt it was not in the purview of EDC. A motion was made by J. Milardo, seconded by R. Santangelo and voted unanimously that the EDC was in favor of supporting funding for an ice skating rink at Donovan Park, provided that it be endorsed by the Park & Rec Commission and the project is their responsibility.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Cynthia G. Wilcox

CGW/bds

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