



NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION ZONE ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES OF MEETING

June 12, 2009

The Neighborhood Revitalization Advisory Board held a meeting on Friday, June 12, 2009, 10:00 AM, at the Larson Center, East Hartford Housing Authority, 81 Woodlawn Circle, East Hartford.

BOARD MEMBERS or DESIGNEES PRESENT:

W. David LeVasseur, Chair, NRZ Advisory Board; Undersecretary, IGP, OPM
Roxane Fromson, DOT
Bob Hannon, DEP (Margaret Welsh retired 6/1/09)
Brian Kobylarz, Downtown NRZ, Norwich

Larry Lusardi, DECD
Lorraine Power, Mayberry Village NRZ/MRA (Revitalization Association), East Htfd
Robert Ross, DPS
Jeanne Webb, Town of East Hartford

OTHERS PRESENT:

Joan Hubbard, OPM/IGP & Staff, NRZ Advisory Board
Judith Barlow-Roberts, MV NRZ/NCCJ
Lilia Kieltyka, DECD
Betty Korngiebel, MRA (MVNRZ)

Everett Murray, MRA (MVNRZ)
Rita Murray, MRA (MVNRZ)
John Simone, CT Main St. Center
John Sitaras, MRA (MVNRZ)

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT:

David Bahlman, CT Commission on Culture & Tourism
Timothy Bannon, CHFA
Tim Beeble, City of Stamford
Suzanne Blancaflor, DPH
Liz Brown, Commission on Children
Tom Coble, City of Bridgeport
Timothy Coppage, CHFA
Leslie Creane, Town of Hamden
Susan Cullen, Town of Groton
John DaRosa, South End NRZ, Stamford
Peter Davis, City of Norwich
Kevin Ewing, West River NRZ, New Haven
Keisha Freckleton, Blue Hills NRZ, Hartford
Marc Herzog, Community-Technical Colleges

Linda Hodge, Town of Colchester
Rose Marie Lee, Windham NRZ
Greg Lewis, CEDF
Kenneth Malinowski, City of New Britain
Margaret Malinowski, New Britain NRZ Representative
Patricia Mayfield, DOL
Kathleen McNamara, Waterbury Development Corporation
Ted Montgomery, Town of Windham (retiring 6/30/09)
Sofee Noblick, Greeneville NRZ, Norwich
Roger O'Brien, City of Hartford
Andy Rizzo, City of New Haven
Lisa Velez, Brooklyn NRZ, Waterbury

- I. **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, RETIREES, ADOPTION OF MINUTES, AND NRZs IN THE STATE** – David LeVasseur, Undersecretary for the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) Intergovernmental Policy Division and Chair of the Advisory Board, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Advisory Board members and other participants introduced themselves. Mr. LeVasseur noted that 10 municipalities have 32 active NRZs in the state. The next NRZ expected to come on line is the West Side NRZ in Stamford. He also informed the group about the retirements of Larry Lusardi and

Margaret Welch, as well as Joan Hubbard. A motion was made by Larry Lusardi and seconded by Roxane Fromson to accept the minutes of the May 16, 2008, NRZ Advisory Board meeting, and they were approved by voice vote.

- II. THE CONNECTICUT MAIN STREET CENTER (CMSC)** – The Chair asked John Simone, President and CEO, to discuss his program with the Board. Mr. Simone asked how many members were present for the CMSC presentation in 2006 and a few members raised their hands. He said he had reviewed NRZ materials and commented on the enviable tools available to NRZs, e.g. the waiver of codes and regulations.

Mr. Simone started his slide show (attached) by describing *the Main Street approach to downtown revitalization*[™]. He reviewed the mission of the organization and described the history of the decline of downtown areas, including the forces and trends that changed them. The National Trust for Historic Preservation established the Pilot Main Street Program. CMSC entails a four point approach involving the following values: economic, physical, social, and civic. The approach is a management program for commercial districts that must have public/private partnerships to succeed and includes seven other principles: comprehensive, incremental, quality, changing attitudes, focusing on existing assets, self-help program, and implementation oriented. CMSC's core functions for designated sites are providing resources (including preservation grants) and coordination, as well as giving technical assistance, education and training through the Downtown Revitalization Institute. The program also acts as an information clearinghouse.

The benefits of CMSC consist of such factors as jobs, increased property values, and community pride. The program has demonstrated that revitalized downtowns can support large employers and taxpayers. Illustrations of the continuing growth of the National Main Street Network from 1980 through 2008 were shown. In 2005, there were 1,877 programs launched. A nationwide survey identified the biggest challenges facing each program, incorporated such factors as small business survival and the struggle for funds. In Connecticut, member programs are located in New London, Norwich, Upper Albany in Hartford, Rockville in Vernon, Simsbury, Winsted, and Westville Village in New Haven. There are also almost 30 regional members in the state.

Since 1996, reinvestment in designated communities as paid off with \$629 million invested in downtowns, 378 new businesses, 2,326 new jobs and hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours counted. The ratio of investment is that for each \$1 invested, the return is \$64.09.

In center cities there is new trend of restoring historic areas and an increasing demand for choices. He described ways to satisfy these demands. Mixed-use and mixed income development is an important approach being utilized, and it involves downtown housing, although there are barriers to such housing. CMSC offers a way to make doing the right thing easier. The website is www.ctmainstreet.org.

- III. MAYBERRY VILLAGE NRZ (MVNRZ)** – Mr. LeVasseur asked Lorraine Power to inform the Advisory Board about her NRZ. Jeanne Webb, East Hartford Development Director, showed slides during Ms. Power's talk. She began by welcoming the Board to Mayberry Village, the NRZ's neighborhood and home. Her review of the demographics included that Mayberry Village embraces 668 households with a population of about 2,000, including educational levels from illiterate to Ph.D.s and incomes between bare survival and middle class. There are at least 30 ethnicities and every skin color under the sun.

The MVNRZ is a small grassroots group dedicated to revitalizing the neighborhood and self empowering its people. Its accomplishments, following the development of the strategic plan and passage of the town ordinance in July of 2005, fall into the following categories: beautification, events, community services, and housing and density. The group funded the Annual Planting Program for home/property owners. It also placed markers for Mayberry Village at the corners of Chester Street and Great Hill Road, as well as Walnut Street and Woodlawn Circle with funding from M.R.A./Town of East Hartford. Other beautification achievements are below:

- Funded a bench and plantings for the rest area at the south end of Mayberry School parking lot.
- Funded plantings at the Larson Center.
- Conducted many volunteer "Village Cleanups" to get rid of disallowed bulk waste along curbsides.
- Initiated and supported Town removal of abandoned vehicles on Village streets.
- Began the Town effort to clearly mark and designate "no parking zones" in all Village fire lanes.

Events involved at least 10 Annual Hallowe'en and Holiday parties for children with Santa, plus candy and gifts for all. The NRZ also held three "Days in the Park" featuring supervised games, refreshments, and food for the children. Community services entailed:

- Published "The Village Voice" NRZ newsletter for two years, promoting available services, and covering all newsworthy subjects for property owners, tenants, children and senior citizens.
- Sponsored two workshops on diversity, conducted by National Conference for Community and Justice, which resulted in an increased amount (46%) of persons of color on the Board of Directors. The workshops also served as leadership training for members.
- Partnered with the Town in connecting resources with residents and landlords, as well as in promoting recycling in the community; with United Illuminating Operations WRAP (program to winterize homes of low income families; and with Foodshare.

Housing and density concerns were addressed through a workshop for renters, home owners and landlords, given by the Housing Education Resource Center of Hartford. At present, the NRZ is contemplating the proposed Village Act and considering the ramifications to residents and landlords in the Village.

Problems still facing the organization are drug trafficking, blight, children's health and safety, environmental and beautification issues, decent and affordable housing, jobs and jobs readiness, as well as marketing Mayberry Village. The signs of hope for the NRZ are that the Village looks better than five years ago, and parents walk children to and from school; they also significantly involve themselves in the children's lives and education. In addition, the Town of East Hartford expressed a desire to help obtain funding for planters and raised beds for tenants to grow their own produce without altering existing landscaping. The Town also is interested in restoring natural plants to the area, in both common and private areas, for no-maintenance beautification, as well as to support the abundance of wildlife in the Village surrounds. A Well Child Clinic will be restored in the Larson Center, run by UCONN Medical School.

In the future the fiscal realities of the NRZ office expenses plus insurance have hamstrung efforts to seriously address the mission and conduct meaningful projects. The East Hartford Housing Authority charges \$1,200 per year for rent and requires \$1 million in insurance costing \$850 per year.

IV. ADJOURNMENT – David LeVasseur thanked the East Hartford and the Mayberry Village NRZ for hosting the meeting, the morning snacks, and the luncheon provided. The meeting was adjourned. A summary of DOT’s Transportation Enhancement Program and a Connecticut Economic Development Fund (CEDF) brochure were distributed. After eating, John Sitaras, a member of the NRZ, gave a walking tour of the neighborhood highlights.

**Connecticut Main Street Center
The Main Street Approach
to
Downtown Revitalization™**



Charting Your Course to a Vibrant Downtown

CT Main Street Mission Statement

The mission of Connecticut Main Street Center is *to help build* economically vibrant, traditional main streets as a foundation for healthy communities *by providing training* to its network of public and private partners and *by advocating* for positive change.



Charting Your Course to a Vibrant Downtown

**History of the Decline of
Downtowns**

www.ctmainstreet.org

Until the 1950's
America's downtowns
were the center of:

- commerce
- government
- culture
- entertainment



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**Forces & Trends that Changed
the Character of Downtowns:**

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- Advent of the federal highway system after WWII
- Retail trends
- Change in downtown physical environment



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**The National Trust for
Historic Preservation
developed the first
Pilot Main Street Program**

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The Main Street 4-Point Approach™
Increases Downtown's:

- **Economic value** – through *Economic Restructuring*
- **Physical value** – through *Design*
- **Social value** – through *Promotion*
- **Civic value** – through *Organization*



Connecticut MAIN STREET
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The Main Street 4-Point Approach™
8 Principles

- Comprehensive
- Incremental
- Quality
- Public/Private Partnership
- Changing Attitudes
- Focus on Existing Assets
- Self-Help Program
- Implementation Oriented



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The Main Street Four-Point Approach™ is a management program for commercial districts.

Must have strong Public / Private Partnerships to succeed.



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Partnerships are Key

- Municipal staff & elected officials
- Local, regional & state agencies
- Civic organizations
- Youth, Seniors
- Heritage / Preservation / Conservation
- CVB, Chamber
- SBOC
- Hospitals, Social Services
- Realtors, Developers
- NR2s, CDCs
- Corporations, Utilities
- Downtown property, business owners
- Merchant Associations
- Schools, Cultural Institutions, Library
- Restaurants, Hotels, Entertainment facilities
- Churches, Synagogues, Faith-based entities
- Residents: downtown & surrounding neighborhoods



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Benefits of a Main Street Program

- Community Pride
- Jobs
- Collaboration
- Property Values
- Protects Assets
- Increases Tax Base
- Appropriate Development




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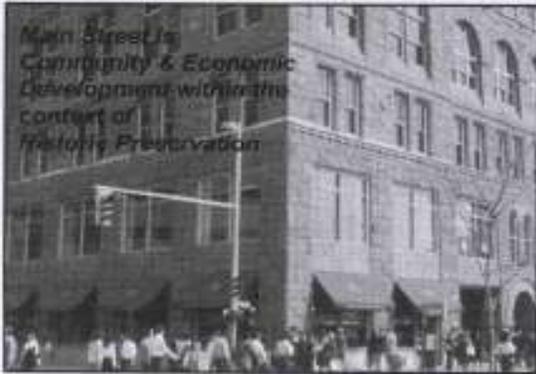
Benefits of a Main Street Program

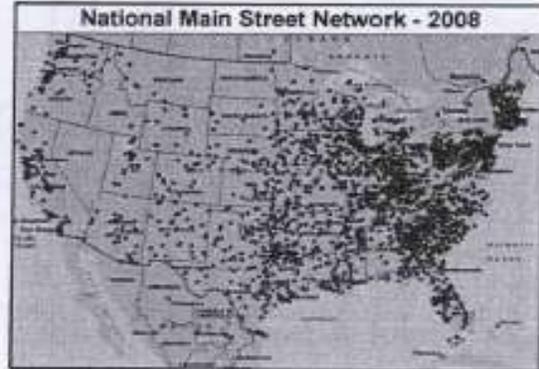
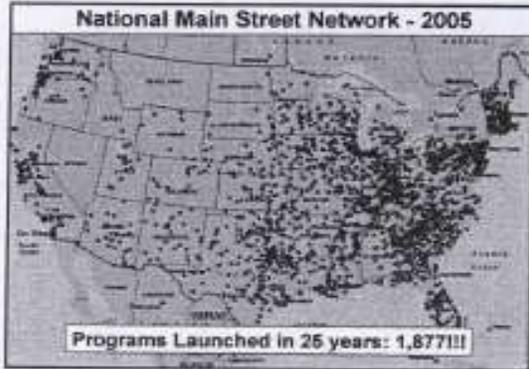
Supports one of your community's largest employers and taxpayers:

Downtown!



Connecticut MAIN STREET
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**National Main Street Survey
Top 5 Challenges**

1. Small business survival
2. Struggle for funds
3. Property development
4. Competition for volunteers
5. Rebuilding infrastructure



www.ctmainstreet.org

Reinvestment in Designated Connecticut Main Street Communities since 1996:

- ◆ \$626 million invested in CMSC downtowns
- ◆ 378 net new businesses
- ◆ 2,326 net new jobs
- ◆ over 207,400 volunteer hours logged

R.O.I. \$1 = \$64.09

www.ctmainstreet.org

CMSC Founding Partners

Energy for a Growing World

CMSC Growth Partners

Connecticut MAIN STREET
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Core Functions

- **Resource provider/coordinator**
- **Technical Assistance / Education/ Training / Info Clearing House**



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Services from CMSC

Intangibles

- **Ongoing consultation/technical support**
- **Provide checks and balances**
- **Help sell to local stakeholders**
- **Source of new ideas and trends**
- **Provide outside objective point of view**
- **We build the network**



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CMSC'S Advocacy Program

Purpose

- Enhance downtown-friendly policies
- Develop resources to revitalize downtowns
- Position CMSC as downtown expert and advocate

Guiding Principle

To align CT Main Street network in support of like-minded organizations' public policy initiatives that benefit Connecticut's downtowns.



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2008-2009 Downtown Revitalization Institute



Developing Downtown Masterplans



Creating Business Improvement Districts



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Preservation PLACE GRANT PROGRAM CONNECTICUT MAIN STREET CENTER



Mixed-use/Mixed-income Development



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Pendulum of Development is Swinging

- Restoring a 5,000 year old historic form
 - the City Center where:
 - people felt safe & lived
 - commerce thrived
 - public spaces filled to celebrate milestones and protest injustices

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Increasing Demand for Choices

- Losing young adults
- 83% of National Realtors' survey respondents listed "shorten commute time" as no. 1 criteria for choosing a home
- Growing population wants range of housing types and costs

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Increasing Demand for Choices

- Young single women will be the majority of the workforce by 2010
- America's population growth fueled by immigration
- AARP survey - 71% want to live near transit, goods and services

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Increasing Demand for Choices

- 67% of all US households do not have school-age children
- Supply will not keep up with demand driving prices higher
- Downtowns are well suited for mixed-income housing

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Ways to Satisfy Demand

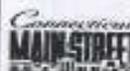
- Appeal to younger women - clean, safe, retail, residential, recreation offerings
- Keep younger workers as they age - quality schools, childcare, family offerings
- Diverse price points for housing
- Affordable & accessible healthcare
- Attractive transportation options

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Mixed-use Development

- Importance of first floor retail
- Residential development - retail follows people
- Bringing upper floors to life
- Embodies best principles of community & economic development, smart growth and historic preservation

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Mixed-use Development

- Promotes compact/efficient use of land
- Multi-modal transportation options
- Developing w/in existing infrastructure
- Developing integrated projects
- Need to put all the tools in place



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Downtown Housing

- Downtown residents spend 3 to 4 times what a downtown employees spends
- Residents inject 24/7 life
- Market segments vulnerable to affordability issue are targets for downtown living – young adults, seniors, artists



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Downtown Housing

- Current senior housing is isolated forcing people to drive for every need
- Seniors living downtown are healthier from walking more
- Close proximity to jobs, goods and services reduces traffic



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Barriers to Downtown Housing

- Mixed-use development is a lost art form
- Land assembly is difficult
- Regulatory barriers
- Financing gap
- Local property owners have no redevelopment expertise
- Density is a dirty word



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Make the Right Thing Easy

- Building capacity to reach consensus
- Focusing on our connections and values
- Providing the right choices for all people
- Resources to build and implement comprehensive and integrated plans



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Make the Right Thing Easy

- New zoning
- Reasonable interpretation of codes
- Historic tax credits for mixed uses
- Streamlined permitting process
- TA for mom & pop property owners
- Patient capital



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