

MINUTES OF ALLINGTOWN STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
Notre Dame High School
September 25, 2019

Members Present: Ron Quagliani, Chris Suggs, Robbin Watt Hamilton, Lou Annino, Kevin Vine, and Kathy Weilk. Staff Present: Fred Messore and Dave Killeen.

1. Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 5:35 PM.

1. Call to Order, Welcome

2. Reports Back on Issues of Concern to Steering Committee

Mr. Killeen reported that he had been conducting research on community issues that had been raised during the April 1 Community Workshop and discussed by the Allingtown Steering Committee at their last meeting on May 21, 2019. He reviewed the following topics:

a. Landlord Registration Programs

Based on the Committee's May 21 meeting, staff contacted the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities to request a research project to learn more about Landlord Registration and Inspection Programs. Staff forwarded four documents that had been provided by CCM including:

- i. Landlord Ordinances – a 19-page summary of multiple CT communities that administer Landlord Registration Programs (including Windham, Norwich, Bristol, Ellington, Middletown, Stamford, Vernon, Shelton, Danbury, and Hartford).
- ii. Licensing Requirements for Multifamily Dwellings – a separate 19-page summary of ordinances enacted by various CT communities including Danbury, Hartford, Shelton, Vernon, and Windham.
- iii. 2014 Survey for Housing Codes – This spreadsheet was developed by CCM and lists communities that have Housing (Property Maintenance) Codes, including Bristol, East Hartford, Hamden, Middletown, New Britain, Norwalk, Norwich, Torrington, and Waterbury.
- iv. Certificate of Occupancy Ordinances – This 54-page document summarizes a number of municipal practices dealing with certificates of occupancy and includes information on the

communities of Bridgeport, Bristol, Danbury, Meriden, New Haven, New London, Newington, Norwich, Shelton, and Stamford

Mr. Killeen summarized these reports and indicated that some programs were aimed at registering absentee landlords, others looked at rooming houses, and many included standards for health and safety reasons, all of which were informational. The fees charged in connection with these programs were generally nominal amounts, as low as \$25 per inspection. After reviewing these reports and doing some additional online research, staff came up with 5 or 6 weblinks to cities and rental inspection programs that seemed closer to what the Committee was seeking. Those programs established an inspection program that required periodic inspection of properties to ensure continued compliance with local codes. Some of these communities were charging hundreds of dollars for an inspection and some had sizable staff that were administering these programs.

The Steering Committee was interested in coming up with a model that could have staff supported by the proceeds from inspection revenue. The example in New Haven, the Livable City Initiative, involved several components, including rental inspections as well as capital funding for specific construction projects and neighborhood improvements. New Haven's program is staffed by approximately 40 individuals with an operating budget alone of almost a million dollars. The Committee decided that the Plan should incorporate a summary of some of these approaches with a recommendation that the City evaluate the potential for creating a program that could work for West Haven.

In addition to encouraging stronger code enforcement in the residential areas of the neighborhood, there was discussion of an interest in promoting an increase in home ownership in the neighborhood. Committee member Watt Hamilton had previously mentioned a Down Payment Assistance program that Yale offers to its employees to encourage them to consider becoming homeowners in New Haven neighborhoods. She agreed to explore the feasibility of asking Yale to consider expanding this program to encourage home ownership in West Haven as well. She will report back to the Committee on what she learns.

b. Accident Data for Allingtown – Walkable Community

Accident data was provided by the West Haven Police Department for the past three years for the Allingtown neighborhood. This data identified key intersections that had the most number of accidents and the greatest safety risks for pedestrians and automobiles. Mr. Killeen circulated copies of this data and reported on a citywide Bicycle Pedestrian Plan for West Haven that was to begin in the next months by consultants for the Southern CT Regional Council of Governments/RPA. This accident data should be useful for the Allingtown neighborhood to be able to identify key intersections and areas of the neighborhood that should be evaluated for safety improvements (such as bump outs, pedestrian crossings, road narrowing, and other traffic calming measures.)

3. Other Inputs

a. Yale Student Report

Mr. Killeen had provided a link to this study which had been completed recently by students in the Yale School of Forestry. The Study examined the neighborhoods immediately around the West River in West Haven and New Haven. Two of the students had attended the Allingtown Community Workshop in April. The results of the report were pertinent to the Allingtown planning process. Several of their recommendations could be incorporated into the Allingtown Plan, such as:

- i. Creation of a Marginal Drive Greenway
- ii. Implementation of traffic calming measures and changing current roadway patterns, for which the student report recommended changes to Campbell Avenue between First Avenue and Route 1, for example. The Committee members discussed this image and discussed the fact that implementing road calming measures could also reduce road-carrying capacity and the volume of traffic that could be handled in this area. Committee member Annino made the observation that communities need to choose between those options – either you design roads to move traffic through an area as quickly as possible or you design a road with traffic calming elements that make it safer for pedestrians and those on bikes. The Committee agreed by consensus that the latter was the condition they wanted to see implemented (traffic calming), particularly in the areas close to the intersection of Campbell Avenue and Route 1.

4. Review of Revised Outline for Plan

Staff had mailed a revised outline of the Allingtown Plan based on the April workshop and the May meeting of the Steering Committee. While it was discussed in general, there was no formal action on the revised outline by the Committee.

During this meeting, it was agreed that the Plan should make several recommendations for economic development and improving the commercial areas of the neighborhood. Topics included:

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- Making changes to the Planned Residential Commercial District (RCPD) to encourage mixed use developments and more of a “village environment” as recommended in the City’s Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Use of the Opportunity Zone incentives in the area north of Route 1.
- Use of a Storefront Improvement Loan program currently administered by the City’s Community Development Block Grant Program in the areas along Route 1, Campbell Avenue, and Forest Road that were part of Census Tracts that meet the income qualifications for that Program.
- Recommendations for modifications to the Regional Business District Regulations that could promote biomedical and research uses along Derby Avenue.

5. Next Steps – Next Meeting Date(s)

Mr. Killeen stated, with the direction he had received this evening, he could begin working on a draft of some sections of the Allingtown Plan which could be presented to the public in a follow-up Community Workshop. The Committee had an interest in reviewing these draft recommendations before they are presented to the public for consideration. It was decided that the Committee should meet one more time, possibly at the end of November or beginning of December to review these draft recommendations. Assuming the Committee is comfortable with the recommendations, modifications can be made if necessary, and a public workshop could be scheduled for around January or February 2020.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:15 PM.