

- 16) Attended “*Flip This Town*” premier with TV Middletown. Have been invited to speak on TV Middletown about City revitalization activities.
- 17) Attended Place Matters meeting Monday night to observe how their efforts may compliment city activities.
- 18) Met with Russ to review budgets and expenditures year to date.
- 19) Gone next week for formal CDBG training.
- 20) Incentives for Professionals to move to Middletown – have some information gathered. Need to review with HUD guidelines and understand how other cities have funded these programs. Teachers/firefighters/police, etc. (it could be two, three or four months before Mr. Adkins would have something solid to show council)
- 21) Have met with our partners to improve relations, maximize leveraging of funding and utilize each program to fullest potential. Met with:
 - a. Transitional Living
 - b. Hope House
 - c. People Working Cooperatively – emergency repairs
 - d. Federal Home Loan Bank
 - e. SELF
 - f. Don Imhoff – real estate attorney who prepares much of our paperwork.
 - g. Still need appointments with HOME, Lifespan, Neighborhood Housing Services.
- 22) Code Enforcement:
 - a. 2300 letters sent to properties in violation.
 - b. Phones busy but very little negative feedback. (Phone are rolling, there are up to five persons to answer phone calls)
 - c. List of Middletown partnering businesses on City website by mid-April.
 - d. FAQ being developed to add to Code Enforcement on website.
 - e. Obtaining 2009 IPMC for implementation in Middletown. Currently using 2003 Edition.
 - f. Concentration March to May – residential with minimal commercial. Dealing with 2300 letters and incoming nuisance complaints
 - g. Will take more active role in commercial in May – part time inspector and shift of existing inspectors time to commercial.

2009 Plan – remove all rated 5 residential properties from Middletown housing stock. Develop plan and implement for rehab/demolition of all rated 4 properties in Middletown housing stock. Code Enforcement works on all 1-3 rated properties throughout the year. Improve appearance in commercial districts, downtown through code, sign enforcements. Demolish blighted commercial buildings with available funding in a way that compliments Economic Development goals.

2010 Plan – by 2010, all 4 and 5 rated housing stock is gone. Twenty-three hundred letters were sent to residents and all rated 1, 2, and 3’s will be dealt with in 2009. Staff will work on bringing all remaining 1,2,3 rated residential properties and all commercial properties into compliance.

Mr. Adkins reported his goal to have the detailed NSP plan by June 2009 using gathered data and objective rehab/demolition guidelines.

B. Section 8 updates – Ms. Gilleland reported on staff’s meeting this week with CONSOC. The negotiations are going well. Staff hopes to have a contract before council at the first meeting in April.

Ms. Scott Jones advised the question is out in the community on how Mr. Adkins and staff were able to move on this so quickly. Were inspectors moved from different departments? There was discussion about there being only two inspectors under Angela Tucker.

Mr. Schiavone reminded there has been some reorganization of city departments and divisions. There were inspectors in housing and one in the police department. He likes the objective view of putting rating numbers on these houses. He then thanked CONSOC administrators for coming to the meeting. He explained the communication has not been good the prior 18 years and much became clearer during recent council meetings. Council working through subcommittees is a new format and the committee would like to pinpoint types of information for CONSOC reports. Council wants periodic reports on a regular basis. They don’t want to get bogged down with information and data. They want to know the meaty issues being dealt with. The committee was hoping to pick CONSOC’s brain on what information they feel pertinent to council as they go forward with this contact.

Harrison Joseph, Sr. said the City has outlined a number of reports during the contract negotiations. There are data relating to policy and other data is simply statistical data that show where trends are moving too, where financials are at certain points. They can submit such reports as:

- Financial data

- Reports on terminations and new issuance of vouchers

- Reports on disabled, elderly, families, ethnicity

- They can give program data and periodically set goals and report how they are moving toward those goals

Mr. Schiavone asked if there were other things important to Council as the Housing Authority.

Mr. Joseph said there is coordination with activities with other departments of the city, such as Code Enforcement. Also, some policies that they could implement or report, issues that they find that need action by the city. The City can also report to CONSOC activities and issues that they are dealing with. CONSOC could have more eyes and ears in community. There are already discussions on working with landlord issues. If there is a problem landlord in the SECTION 8 program, they can report those problems. Those are policy decisions they are discussing through the negotiations.

Mr. Schiavone asked about city services and different departments working together. The lines of communication with other departments regarding enforcement, crime information, etc. have to be clear.

Mr. Adkins explained the contract is a skeleton basically. The Administrative Plan is in more detail.

Mr. Schiavone asked how soon after contract negotiations would Council have an Administrative Plan.

Mr. Adkins reported the plan is 80 to 85% good now. There are a few new issues from the contract that will have to be laid into the plan.

Mr. Mulligan asked if the 80-85% good language was dictated by HUD.

Mr. Joseph stated CONSOC will have a contract that will dictate that they will do the work that is defined in the Administrative Plan. That plan is a living document that can be amended or revised occasionally. The policies are in that Administrative Plan. There are certain activities of the program that the city cannot change, such as rent reasonableness, etc. Then there are local policies that can be in the plan. One huge local policy deals with residents have preference. There are things that can be tweaked by changing priorities in the policy. There are certain priorities for home ownership, if you want to focus on certain areas for housing, etc. You cannot steer where a person dwells, but you can select an area and focus on just code enforcement and target neighborhoods and areas to complement certain things being considered by the City.

Mr. Adkins said Mr. Joseph was right on the mark. The City has not used Section 8 to the best possible advantage.

Mr. Mulligan said from the policy level, things heard loud and clear were issues with crime rates, criminal background issues and criminal records. Where does that fit in the Administrative Plan?

Mr. Joseph feels they have a very good screening program. Many applicants are eliminated during the screening process. They feel they could have a better and more efficient dialogue with police. If police come into a Section 8 unit, and the incident reports that the person that's on the lease of the unit is the perpetrator, they have more authority to take action. If the person on the lease of the unit is not involved in incident, they can't do anything. It's very important on how the incident report is written. If it is written that it appears the tenant is permitting this activity to occur, there is more authority for action.

Sandra Joseph added that one word is very important, **permitting**. If the resident is permitting the activity, the issue can be addressed through the program.

Mr. Joseph, Jr. added that landlords also have the power to report violations and request inspections.

Mr. Joseph, Sr. explained in an area where there is a lot of conflicting fault, CONSOC is obliged to have due process hearings. Legal aid periodically comes in to challenge a decision. When that has happened in the past, they have always agreed the person needs to be terminated.

Ms. Scott Jones added that HUD is very specific and very clear on violations, especially drug related activity. If you have one person over and that person is involved in an incident, it's noted and it's not that bad. But if there are five or six police incidents, then there's a pattern. The pattern shows clearly that the person is permitting the activity. She told Mr. Joseph that during the interview session, she felt CONSOC did a great job showing the reports of persons terminated from the program for criminal activities. She felt they didn't have a problem with the issue, because they were on top of that issue. She suggested maybe monthly or quarterly reports before Council. She asked if there was a reporting mechanism that could include those crime statistics. She'd like to see that in those periodic reports.

Mr. Joseph said Council can establish policy. Yes, you can do that. Does that hold us harmless, no? All that does is say we have done what we can do. Once you set that policy, it does not hold you harmless from litigation. There have been housing authorities that have had to pay huge penalties and fees. He explained an incident regarding the policy of having only one pet. If the tenant is elderly or disabled, they can have one pet. That policy also says if you are not under certain circumstances you have to pay a pet deposit, if it's not a service animal. They had a tenant move in and sign an acknowledgement of

that policy. An extended payment plan was set up for the pet deposit payment. They even waived the first payment because the income status made the rent at zero. There were reviews and the rent went to \$30. During an inspection of the unit, they found three cats. The cats were tearing stuff up and the tenant was told she had to get rid of the cats. The tenant goes to legal aid and they tell her the policy is strictly enforced for one pet. She then gets legal representation from Akron to take the case and they argue there should be exceptions because she's mentally disabled. CONSOC's legal advisors asked why not settle and pay \$6,000 legal fees? CONSOC could lose the case because the Federal regulation stated one pet and the State's regulation stated "pets". The States interpretation differed. CONSOC didn't want to set a precedence allowing more than one pet so they pursued and won the case. The cost of winning was \$28,000. The tenant moved and the pet policy stands.

Mr. Schiavone asked about legal fees and whether they are paid from the contract.

Mr. Joseph responded the City makes the policy. Under the new contract, the city has to provide a provision to hold CONSOC harmless or put them under the City's insurance policy umbrella.

Mr. Adkins said and Mr. Joseph agreed when they sit down together, Council will see the best plan.

Mr. Joseph said there are things that you have to do and things that you want to do. Assumption is there are a lot of things that Doug wants to do that CONSOC wants to do or can help with. Such as neighborhood improvement, if everybody is working toward that goal it can be accomplished. In a recent meeting he heard there is discussion of changing the character of a certain street and moving Hope House. He said all parties need to be involved in these discussions. They fund major single-room occupancy vouchers at Hope House. They fund eleven units at Hope House.

OLD BUSINESS

Review of City and HUD discussions regarding a former employee's ongoing emails. Review prior discussions with Councilman Marconi. Mr. Marconi was not in attendance and this discussion was postponed.

At 9:20 a.m. the meeting adjourned until May 1st 2009 at 8:00 a.m.