

Statement for the Common Council Middletown, CT

Monday, 7PM
May3 ,2004

Roy Lisker

City plans destruction of Middletown's North End

At tonight's meeting Bill Warner, chairman of the Redevelopment Agency, will propose that the *entire* district of the North End east of Main Street (Ferry, Green and Rapallo Streets) be leveled and replaced by privately owned housing. The neighborhood will cease to exist, the low to medium income population that live there will be pushed out. This is the intent of Resolution 10-6 on the Agenda: "*Approving the Richman Group as the designated developer for the North End Urban Renewal Plan and authorizing the Mayor to execute the Memorandum of Understanding.* "

By doing so the City drops its commitment to the *North End Housing Initiative* (NEHI), consisting of the North End Action Team, Connection, Habitat for Humanity, Nehemiah House and Alderhouse Corporation. The city acknowledged NEHI as the official developer last year. NEHI has been working on plans for this neighborhood for 6 years which specifically include all of the

many different kinds of people now living and working in the North End.

The Richman Group, which has never done any work in this city and doesn't know a thing about this neighborhood, has proposed that the neighborhood be demolished, the poor people pushed into a "project" of 96 housing units and everything else converted to private ownership housing. In its short letter to the Redevelopment Agency, deliberately vague on details, it insults everyone in that neighborhood, promising that it will no longer "smell bad"!

Even Wesleyan University is angry about this proposal. It's already invested time and money into the Green Street Arts Center, located at the heart of this neighborhood, which was intended to offer classes to the children and families who live there. If the City has its way, the GSAC will lose its purpose for existing. In the worst case projection, the east side of the North End will turn into the sort of wasteland one finds in the Miller and Bridge area (north of the Arrigoni Bridge). Richman will pull out after demolishing everything in sight, and the 3 blocks of Ferry, Green and Rapallo will serve as the town landfill for the next 30 years. I encourage everyone to come to the meeting of the Common Council

Thank you, Roy Lisker