

Economic Development Report- Central and Western Mass.

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Meetings:

Northampton: The Northampton Development Corporation met on Tuesday, March 24, to close on the sale of the Northampton Hotel. The Warren Co. will purchase the property by July 1, 1981, and rehab of the Hotel will be completed in roughly 12-15 months. The Saunders family (of the Park Plaza and Lenox Hotels in Boston) have been out to visit the hotel and are under consideration for management. The members of the NDC have also pledged to purchase \$1 million of the revenue bonds. We were involved with the creation of the NDC and were acknowledge at the press briefing for our help and support.

Holyoke: I toured three industries in Holyoke and met with Mayor Proulx Tom McColgen (CD Dir.) and Bob Bateman (Industrial Affairs Dir for the city. I visited National Blank Book (the largest area employer and a major paper manufacturer), Pratt & Austin (a small print and card shop recently bought out by the employees), and Dual Manufacturing (a small chair and steel forge shop). Each shop was very receptive to the visit and Dan Sullivan (pres. of National Blank Book) has expressed an interest in participating on PT's business advisory committees. My later meetings with the Mayor and CD dir. updated me on the intentions of Wang labs to locate in Holyoke (with the help of a UDAG to be submitted in April). Holyoke received 2 UDAGs in this 1/4.

Greenfield: The rehab of the Garden Theater has sparked some interest with Marty Adler at ACT. I visited with the Selectmen, the county planner, the chamber and John Hineman of the Franklin County Trust to explore possibilities of a cooperative venture with ACT, town CDBG funds and a loan pool with local banks. All seem receptive to the idea. In another meeting in Greenfield, a dispute with the town and Jay Schocket on details of the Weldon Hotel was resolved and with amendment monies in place, closing on this project is expected Friday, April 10.

Springfield: I attended the Springfield "Outlook '81" annual luncheon with Sen. Roth as keynote speaker. (Actually Roth was kept on the floor on this particular Friday and had to send his wife in his place.) I then had a meeting with Frank Gulluni to discuss the possibilities of the skill center meeting the training needs of the laid-off Uniroyal workers. This was followed by several meetings with the local and regional DES officials, Rep. Ken Lemanski (D-Chicopee) and Cong. Boland. Letters were sent to the workers informing them of the change in regulations (which allowed TRA recipients to pay for their training) and information on area vocational programs. The letters were cosigned by PT and Sen. Kennedy.

Met with Dennis Coffey of the B&M to discuss their proposed expansion at the East Deerfield Yard. While there are no sources available with the federal government grant programs (e.g. EDA and the B&M cannot afford a low interest loan) there is some hope that a program which provides funds for hardware when matched with an equal labor contribution, will be included in the State Transportation Bond at \$10 m.

Worcester: Visited with Dennis Baker and Alec Cameron of Norton Co. to discuss their position and interest in the resource recovery facility that was voted down by the city council in February. The vote came after a Glendale civic assoc. filed a protest over the proposed location and impacts. My sense is that some compromise could be reached if Norton is willing to invest their own credibility. I am presently awaiting for their response on this. I also visited the Higgins Armory at the invitation of Dick West. They are in special need of energy conservation assistance to keep the museum open. Though I was not positive about the prospects of energy grants, I did mention the problem to Dennis Baker at Norton and he was very receptive to the idea of a Norton Corporate donation.

Water Issues: In a meeting with Elizabeth Kline of the State Office of Environmental Affairs, we were informed that as a result of the Phase I report of the MDC Water Supply Study and EIR (including the Ct. River diversion) water conservation, ground water development, leak detection and repair and watershed management are all policies of the MDC and no longer options to the diversion. This is a position that we advocated in a meeting with the MDC nearly two years ago. Kline explained the management flow in Environmental Affairs and their priorities for the coming year.

Industrial Revenue Bonds will be under attack this spring and Bob Patterson is preparing testimony on the issue. Though MIFA has been allowed to issue bonds without location restriction, it has been restrictive as to the nature of the business.

Sidelights: Provided Janet Goldberg (CD Dir.-Pittsfield) with info on forming an EDIC to administer their commercial/industrial loan program.... Spoke with Mr. Schreibman from Va. on the Lowell Plan and other urban development efforts. He is writing a research paper on Education and Eco Devel. and will be in touch with Missy... ..There are discussions about the possibilities of recycling the Holyoke UDAG through the SADC, a regional concept that we have been pushing for some time.... At the request of Bill Breitbart of the Housing Allowance Project I contacted FmHA on their behalf to work out a T.A. grant and 25 unit housing assistance program. The State office has agreed to submit a letter in support of the HAP application and we will do the same...Was called by Fred Muhel of the Franklin County Planning Dept. on an Orange EDA grant for an amendment approval because the project bids came in too high. Frank Barnes (EDA Phil) asked that a DEQE approval be submitted and he would have no problems with a sign-off.