

The Star-Ledger

THURSDAY, MAY 3, 1984

Commission focuses on planning for funding, parking, businesses

Madison panel puts priority on downtown push

By ANNE-MARIE COTTONE

MADISON — The top priority of the Madison Downtown Development Commission (DDC) for 1984 is planning the further development of the borough's central business district, Downtown Manager Donald Smartt said yesterday.

In releasing the DDC's first annual report, Smartt noted the 27-member commission is also targeting fundraising, public improvements within the central business district and parking among its prime concerns.

A report dealing with the status of Madison's downtown improvement project is scheduled to be issued later this month, Smartt said, and a public session on the subject will then be held.

The DDC was formed in 1981, and hired Smartt as the borough's first downtown manager in March 1983, in keeping with a recommendation by the Project for Public Spaces (PPS), a non-profit group that conducted a 1980 study of downtown Madison under a grant from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation of Morristown.

The DDC has applied for three grants totaling \$47,000 from the Dodge Foundation for the coming year, Smartt said. One of the applications seeks \$10,000 to finance further work by the PPS, he noted.

When that project is completed, Smartt said, the work done by the PPS will be "in essence, a master plan for the central business district."

Madison began a downtown renovation project in 1978, with the installation of underground utility wires, Victorian-style street lamps and new sidewalks in a portion of the Main Street business district.

The project was planned to be done in three phases, but only the first portion was completed. No work has been done on the project since 1981.

According to the DDC annual report, the next phase of construction is anticipated to start in the spring of 1985.

This year, the DDC hopes to raise a \$41,000 budget consisting of contributions from the borough, the Dodge Foundation, the Madison Chamber of Commerce, banks and corporate donors, the report said.

"Fundraising with the banks and corporations is under way," Smartt said. He noted Schering-Plough Corp., which recently moved its headquarters from Kenilworth to the Giralda Farms Executive Office

Park in Madison, has donated \$2,000.

Contributions are also being sought from PIC Realty Corp., the Prudential insurance Co. of America subsidiary that owns Giralda; C.R. Bard Co, of Murray Hill and Sea-Land Industries Investments Inc., both of which have purchased land at Giralda, Smartt said.

"We will ask them to underwrite some of the programming," he said, noting the DDC has scheduled six entertainment events for the downtown district this year.

The commission also will assess the feasibility of scheduling commuter van service between Giralda and the central business district to enable employees working at Giralda to go downtown for lunch and shopping.

So far, Schering-Plough is the only company located at Giralda. C.R. Bard has announced its intention to build a headquarters facility there, while Sea-Land several years ago made a land purchase agreement.

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