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August 14, 2005

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Middlesex condemns use of eminent domain

By REKA BALA
Staff Writer

MIDDLESEX -- The Middlesex Borough Council has passed a resolution ruling out the use of its power of eminent domain to condemn property as part of any redevelopment.

"You can put at ease the concerns of a lot of residents and a lot of business owners that the town is not going to ... acquire property," said Council President Jerry D'Angelo. "I think it's comforting for individuals to know they're not going to be forced out."

D'Angelo also said a simple label change on the project from redevelopment to either revitalization or rehabilitation may be necessary. By identifying it as anything other than redevelopment, it would ensure that the council could never press for eminent domain.

While the resolution is good for only one year -- it would have to be reapproved at the January 2006 reorganization meeting -- Mayor Ron Dobies said he would "absolutely" continue to support it and encourage its adoption each year.

Councilman Michael Hompesch said the change would not affect the project's goal of creating a "nicer-looking area" along Mountain Avenue and Lincoln Boulevard.

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