

News

## Residents go one-on-one with the mayor

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NEW BRITAIN — More than a dozen city residents, and a few from outside the community, gathered at City Hall Tuesday for a chance to speak one-on-one with Mayor Timothy Stewart.

Some wanted to complain, others to compliment. One wanted to advocate for community gardens and another wanted permission to document a part of the city that is slated to fade into history.

For Gloria Deady, a former city resident, the meeting was a request to move back to the city and into the D'Amato Apartments on Chestnut Street.

"I've wanted to move back to New Britain for several years," Deady said, after meeting with Stewart. "Maybe he can help me find an opening."

It was something Stewart said he would inquire about and get back to her. For Sharon Taratula, the issue was a noisy neighbor who likes to play loud music at night. The mayor assured her he would have someone from the city look into the problem.

One of the more interesting requests was for the city to look at starting community gardens. Sven Pihl, newly moved to the city, was active in starting community gardens in the New Haven area and hoped to do the same again.

"When people can come together and work together and produce their own food, it gives them a stronger feeling of community," Pihl said. "Some children think food just magically appears at the grocery store. They don't understand the connection to a healthy lifestyle that comes with seeing your own food come from the ground."

Pihl said he would like to see multiple tracts around the city where families could grow their food.

"In this economy it's a big savings," he said. "And, it tastes better, too."

A group of women came before Stewart to talk about the plight of feral cats and the city's poor showing when it comes to getting stray animals adopted.

"The euthanasia of dogs in New Britain is way too high," said spokeswoman Jessica Corsaletti of Berlin. "Most of the dogs picked up by animal control end up being killed because finding homes is not a priority."

Surprised at the number of animals being euthanized when there were so many other free or inexpensive options, Stewart said that perhaps it was time for the animal control department to start looking at new things.

Richard Marzi of the North-Oak Neighborhood Revitalization Zone wanted to invite the mayor to a neighborhood meeting and to comment on park development in the area.

One of the most interesting of the visits was from photographer Peter Bosco. Bosco, who documents change in communities, wanted permission to enter the now-deserted Pinnacle Heights neighborhood so that he could document the demolition of the low-income housing development.

"I grew up there," Bosco said. "I'd like to preserve the history before it all disappears under the bulldozers."

Stewart, who also grew up in Pinnacle Heights, welcomed the idea and pointed Bosco toward city officials who would be able to help him.

"It's a great idea," Stewart said. "They're all good ideas, even the ones that tend to be critical. But that's how we get things done."

City residents who missed the open-office opportunity can go to the city's Web site and contact the mayor with their concerns.

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