

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

April 1, 1997

7:00 PM

Mayor Wieczorek called the meeting to order.

Mayor Wieczorek called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Domaingue.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll. There were twelve Aldermen present.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Elise, Reiniger, Sysyn, Clancy, Soucy, Shea,
Domaingue, Pariseau, Cashin, Robert, Hirschmann

Mayor Wieczorek advised that the purpose of the special meeting was to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak and any comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Wieczorek requested that any resident wishing to speak should come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Richard Duckoff, 26 Trenton Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm here tonight as a person that would like to see video poker entirely banned. The reasons being that I think that Manchester should stay the most possible decent city that it can to live in and be an attraction to all the people living in it. Having said that, I realize that the vote the last time went the other way at the last meeting. I understand that there may be another vote on the same subject again. I agree with the Mayor wholeheartedly on this, but I'm not speaking in agreement with him, I am speaking in agreement with the common sense point that he made which was this -- at the Administration Committee that preceded the last board meeting, the Assistant City Solicitor was listening to and he said that, it was in executive session, but it was pretty obvious that what he said was that this was something that could be regulated but it couldn't be banned. The Mayor made a statement that was pure common sense. We all know that lawyers can differ; that the State of New Hampshire is going to come out with a written opinion on the same subject, and I have no reason to believe otherwise, what is the logical reason to do anything other than wait. There is no rationale good defensible reason to do

anything other than wait so that the city can see the written opinion. To do otherwise, is to imply that this is a very political process; that it is more convenient to hide behind an opinion that this is only something that must be regulated, not listen to another opinion that might be otherwise, there is no reason not to wait, and I would urge the Board to realize that this is such an urgent issue, that it has to be settled immediately, like it did the last session, it didn't have to be either, in the aldermanic chambers - it had to be settled then. The other side of this coin is that the Chief of Police of the City of Manchester has asked that this be banned. He is the individual we all look to in the area of law enforcement. It's absolutely beyond question that if Chief O'Neil when I was young, or Chief Stipps, or Chief McGranagan, had come to this Board with a point of view he would have been listened to. This Board does not overrule the Health Department if they were to say that we had a diphtheria or some other epidemic, the Board wouldn't say that we don't want you to have anything to do with that because this is not the Board's expertise, nor it is their expertise I say when it comes to law enforcement in this city, that is the expertise of the police department. For this Board, to quickly without a lot more thought overrule the considered opinion of the head of the police department sends a very, very bad signal. We don't have a city we can be proud of if there is a division between the Board of Aldermen and the head of the Police Department. God knows there is a division now as far as the union is concerned. I would urge that the Board rethink their votes and simply wait until the State comes out with their written opinion. If anybody thinks that that is not going to happen, set a time limit on it, the end of the year or whatever you want to set, but let's please wait until we can look at the State's opinion. Thank you very much.

Lloyd Basinow, 503 Amherst Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

On March the 10th there was a communication delivered to the Mayor, it stated and you're getting copies of it.

Dear Mayor Wiczorek:

Your desire to have constructed a Civic Center, with a capacity of 8,000 or more seats, within the Downtown Central Business District including the present site of the State Armory, any adjacent location or Millyard area directly west of Canal Street, raises the question regarding the availability of adequate 2,000-3,000 (or more) parking spaces (night or day) to serve Civic Center patrons.

Would you please let us know before April 1st, what method will be used (or recommended by you) to solve this potential parking problem should a Civic Center be constructed at any anticipated location within one-quarter mile of the Downtown Elm Street Business District.

Respectfully submitted;

s/Lloyd G. Basinow
Vice-Chair
Elm Street Citizens Revitalization Committee

Mr. Basinow stated there was no response from the Mayor. On March the 20th, I hand-delivered a copy of this to the Mayor's home, there still has been no response. There will be no response, there can be no response for the simple reason that there is no parking space available within a quarter-of-a-mile of the Downtown Business of the anticipated location of a Civic

Center which would mean going along with what the Finance Department has already said. A \$45 million Civic Center on 20-year bonds will cost \$95 million, a \$15 million parking garage adjacent to a Civic Center will mean \$32 million added. With the other expenses of operation, maintenance, and furnishings, we're looking at a \$130 million project, not a \$45 million project. Now, it doesn't take much figuring to see that a Civic Center under these conditions would have to produce over \$7.5 million a year in revenue and since the Civic Center would probably not even generate \$3 million, over \$4.5 million per year would have to go to the taxpayer's of this City, over \$2.00 on the tax rate. I'm sorry to say that as much as many of us would like to see a Civic Center, we don't want a tax rate increase, we want to see a referendum on the ballot and I'm sorry to say, Mayor, you've now been "bagged and tagged" along with *The Union Leader* southern carpetbagger Richard Lessner who likes to tell our taxpayers how to spend our money, but he lives in Hooksett because he can't afford Manchester's tax rate and very shortly many of the other citizens of this City that do live here and do pay taxes won't be able to afford the tax rate. These are the cold, hard facts. No figures from the Finance Department or any other source can create adequate parking, lower the cost figures or create more revenue to offset a tax rate increase if a Civic Center is built. And, I challenge you, Mr. Mayor, tell this Board where you intend to park two to three thousand cars, day or night. Thank you very much.

Steve Vaillancourt, 161 Faith Lane, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm a State Representative from Ward 8. I will not talk about the Civic Center this evening, I think everyone knows perfectly well what my position on that is. I do want to offer you three points. One, to give you information on pending legislation, one to extend congratulations, and the third to offer both a challenge and a pledge. By way of information, I brought forth a couple of weeks ago some information about the Rooms & Meals Tax, so I thought I would follow-up tonight by letting you know that by a vote of 20 to 0 the House Finance Committee has sent the bill to keep the increase on those so-called "temporary taxes", the Rooms & Meals Tax, the Communications Services, and the Real Estate Transfer Tax. They put it on the consent calendar for tomorrow, the vote was unanimous. I understand it has been today, removed from the consent calendar, but by all likelihood the tax will remain for Rooms & Meals at 8%, at least for two more years. Secondly, unlike the first speaker this evening, I would like to congratulate the eight Aldermen who voted in favor of the compromise on video gaming machines at your last meeting. Too often, we as public officials are criticized, so when praise is in order, I think it should be offered. I would not deign to lecture this body as the previous speaker has about the role of your particular selves versus that of the Police Chief. I think it would be like saying that if the Commissioner of Safety were to come before my Public Works & Highways Committee in Concord, we would feel obliged to pass whatever he says the Commissioner of Safety. The Police Chief can recommend, but it is your duty to pass legislation. This compromise, in my opinion, was a compromise in the best sense of the word. I fail to see how these legal machines could be banned all together than we would consider banning cigarettes or liquor simply because these legal items are used illegally at times by minor, for example. Yet, by restricting these machines to liquor establishments, I believe you have taken a giant step in limiting their access to places where they can be controlled and used for legal purposes. Congratulations.

Finally, my pledge and challenge pertains to an issue vital to my ward, Ward 8 and that's the Airport. Airport expansion is going to happen, the Access Road is going to happen. It is absolutely vital for the economy not only of the City, but for the entire region. We had a meeting last Tuesday regarding Airport expansion, I spoke with Bob Barry of the Department of Transportation and the State today and they are planning an April 16th meeting to get their final proposals together for the Access Road and either the end of April or the first week in May, we will have a meeting on the Access Road. I would like to stress that as elected officials we can do one of two things. We can choose to stand in the way attempting to arouse the passions of homeowners for our own personal benefit or we can support the expansion at the same time pledging to help individual homeowner's get answers they need and get the best deals possible. As I noted last Tuesday night, I have chosen that second option. It may not be politically expedient, but I believe as Aldermen and Representatives, we need to do what is right rather than put our finger in the air and attempt to do what everybody wants us to do. On an issue so vital to my ward, I will speak out, but I will never attempt to arouse the passions of voters. Instead, I would ask you to join me in the challenge to work behind the scenes with Airport, State, and Federal officials to get answers and solve the problems. I trust we will all do that and I thank you.

Mayor Wieczorek advised that there being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Alderman Soucy, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business could be presented, on motion of Alderman Soucy, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk