

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

November 22, 1999

**7:00 PM
Aldermanic Chambers
City Hall (3rd Floor)**

Mayor Wieczorek called the meeting to order.

Mayor Wieczorek called for the Pledge of Allegiance; this function led by Alderman Pinard.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Klock, Sysyn, Clancy, Pinard, O'Neil, Girard,
Shea, Pariseau, Cashin, Hirschmann.

Absent: Aldermen Reiniger, Rivard, Thibault

Mayor Wieczorek advised that the purpose of the public hearing is to hear those wishing to speak with regard to consideration of the public purpose and the public need and necessity to acquire land by the use of eminent domain or negotiation for the construction of a civic center in the area generally bounded by Elm Street, Cedar Street, Willow Street, Auburn Street, Chestnut Street and Lake Avenue; that a presentation shall be made followed by comments from the public; that each person when recognized shall come to the nearest microphone, state their name and address in a clear loud voice for the record; that each person shall be given one opportunity to speak and comments shall be limited to three minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak.

Mayor Wieczorek commented that this was not a public hearing on the civic center. It is limited to the acquisition of the site, so we want to make sure that you stay on the subject matter we have at hand because this is what was posted for the public hearing.

5. Mayor Wieczorek requested that a presentation be made by representatives of the MDC Civic Center Subcommittee, the City of Manchester and the Civic Center Project Committee.

Elias Skip Ashoo, Chair, MDC Subcommittee on the Civic Center addressed the Board stating the purpose of the hearing as the mayor stated is to consider the taking of property at the corner of Lake Ave and Elm Street for the construction of a civic center. And my job tonight really is to review the reason why this project was started and the purpose behind it and the public benefit that we see in doing this. I would like to recall for you that two years and nine months ago this week, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen asked the Manchester Development Corporation to undertake a feasibility study to consider the question of building a civic center somewhere in downtown Manchester, with the goal of economic revitalization of the downtown.

I think the reasons for that consideration became much clearer as we went through the feasibility study. We saw, and I think many of the people in this room recognize that their property tax bills, their residential property tax bills, were going up much faster than the rate of spending in the City and what was happening quite honestly was that the tax burden was being shifted from the downtown core to the residential taxpayers in this city. In 1986 fifty percent (50%) of the city's bills were being paid by the residential property tax owners, and about fifty percent (50%) was being paid by all commercial property. In 1997, when we started this project, what we found was that residential property tax payers in this city had now started to pay sixty percent (60%) of these bills, and commercial property together paid less than forty percent (40%). I think it was clear that the aldermen and the mayor were concerned about this shift of the tax burden. We needed to find a way to shift it back. Probably one of the greatest, underutilized assets the city has is its downtown. It's pretty clear to see that unless you have a public hearing the streets are empty on Elm Street during the week, and the parking garages are empty, and what we see here is an opportunity to find some sort of a catalyst to generate activity in downtown Manchester during the week, at night, weekends, when the activity just doesn't exist. So we examine the civic center. We were told that a civic center would have to be executed within certain very strict parameters. We have in our feasibility study and in our bidding process adhered to those parameters, and what we found was that a civic center is feasible, would work on this site, is close enough to the downtown area to impact those properties that right now are not paying their fair share on the tax bills. On top of that we found that there was an additional benefit. A civic center is not just a sports facility. What we're finding is that this is a project that can rejuvenate the city by creating a core for family entertainment in the downtown area. This is a project that we hope will bring not only sports fans downtown, but families to see Disney on ice, to see the circus, to attend those events that we know our children, our neighbors are going out of town to see now. We want to keep those dollars in town. We think that by keeping those dollars in town, keeping that activity here, we can create a reason for people to invest in our downtown, raise the property tax levels in the downtown area and take the burden off the residential taxpayer. So we completed our work to this date. It has culminated here at this point at a hearing on the taking of this property. We went through an extensive process as you are aware, because I know this Board has sat through several presentations on the sites. We are comfortable with, and think that this site can best be served by taking the property at the corner of Lake Ave, Elm Street, Auburn and Chestnut and using that as a facility to catalyze the downtown into new activity. Thank you for your time and the opportunity.

Barry Brensinger, Lavalley/Brensinger, Architect utilized a slide presentation stating I would like to spend a few minutes if I may reviewing the site selection process for the new civic center, and to share with you the reasoning behind our conclusion that the most appropriate site is the so-called Staples Site. Mr. Brensinger stated we began the process of studying sites more than two years ago. In fact I was reflecting on this this afternoon, it was about two and one half years ago that we were first selected along with our partners at HLK, and the local civil engineering firm of EF Moran to work on the site selection process. We began that process by looking at nine sites initially. When we were first selected again there were nine sites on the list that had

been predetermined, or pre-selected by MDC. The one thing that they had in common was that they were all in downtown Manchester throughout the development of the projects one of the key criteria has been that the project be located in the downtown for the purpose of stimulating redevelopment. During the course of our studies, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen requested that we research three additional sites which produced a total list of twelve which could be seen on the slide and their locations everyone could be oriented on the slide where Elm Street ran north to south – top to bottom – the river was clearly to the left. The next step in the process having identified candidates, was to focus on criteria, and we wanted to be sure that the selection criteria were comprehensive and objective. We didn't want to exclude any important consideration so each of the twelve sites was evaluated from the standpoint of its physical characteristics, its size, topography, configuration, will the project fit appropriately on the site, parking, the vehicular system, access to highways, access to public transportation systems, impact on downtown and I won't go through the list in detail you seen most of the information before, I will remind you however, that part of the process was to add a little additional weight if you will to some of the criteria (listed in the gray box on the slide) among them was that we considered to be more important than others. And when I say we I mean the total design and development team including our client at the City of Manchester, Manchester Development Corporation. We collectively felt that parking, impact on downtown, acquisition costs, a few of the many criteria were slightly more important than others and should be weighted accordingly. We did so and then we objectively, independently all the members of the design team went through an evaluation of each of the twelve sites, the result of which, (and I don't expect you to see the fine print the slide is only a reminder of the process) was that the Staples Site came out on top when viewed objectively, numerically if you will, based on the criteria. But the process really didn't end at that. It wasn't simply a matter of applying criteria and sitting down in a room and rating each site based on statistics and numbers. We thought it was also important to map quite literally map all of downtown with regard to current building uses, parking, public transportation, utilities and on and on and on. Each of the twelve sites were carefully considered from that standpoint. The purpose being to identify patterns in the city. Patterns of use. Patterns of development. So that we could be certain based on all of that information that the placement of the civic center would be most compatible, most supportive if you will of the fabric of the city, of our downtown. And therefore be the greatest catalyst in further redevelopment at Skip noted a moment ago. As this entire evaluation process was ongoing, and I ask you to bear with me because I am going back through a little bit of history, we also conducted a series of public sessions and I think it's important for us to remember all of that, they occurred more than two years ago at this point so there may be a faint memory. But we had a very well advertised through the media, through posters and publications and mailers a forum specifically on site selection. We held three workshops throughout the city in each of the three corners if there is such a thing of the city, to make them as readily accessible to the residents as was practical. And that process culminated with a model building exercise at the Center of New Hampshire. We had more than 350 of Manchester citizens participate in that process. They were very helpful, very informative, we got a lot of good feedback and good ideas, all of which were applied to the overall process. As we went through this ongoing process of getting all the information we could, we applied to each of the twelve sites a conceptual design for a new civic

center building – this slide happens to be the staples site – approximately 230 square feet in size, it included a substantial public plaza as an amenity for the city that could be used on a daily basis even when there are not specific events at the civic center itself. It included consideration for a limited amount of on-site parking and loading and services. Those kind of very functional aspects of the program that need to work well, but also need to be integrated in a way that they are least obtrusive to the neighborhood. The site needs to have that capacity. Ultimately having gone through that entire process I can tell you that unanimously every member of the design team who participated in the evaluation concluded that Staples is the best possible choice, it is the right size, it is relatively flat in its topography making it easily buildable; it is a regular configuration, you can see from this slide that the site is primarily rectangular, meaning that we can fit the building and parking configurations, and plaza on the site very efficiently using the site to its maximum capacity without a lot of wasted land. It has adequate utilities. It is proximate to substantial public and private parking and I'll come back to that in a second. Its proximate to compatible uses, synergistic uses. I've spoken in the past about the relationship to the Center of New Hampshire, other hospitality issues to FIRST to other athletic venues that have been developed in the city along the river, there is a potential to develop a very strong neighborhood in this general area of the city with those related uses. It has convenient access to public transportation. Access to the highway and we all know about the continued improvements at the Granite Street interchange with 293. It enjoys considerable prominence. It has been our feeling that if the city is to make this significant investment in its downtown, in a landmark building that it should be a building with visibility, and this site happens to be at the Granite Street gateway into the city. It is in the core of downtown, abutting sites with significant redevelopment potential. I mentioned in our criteria that the ability to stimulate further redevelopment downtown was very important we believe that this site and surrounding properties can do that very well. And comparatively speaking when viewed in light of many of the other sites, it is relatively affordable and is also of single ownership which was being helpful in streamlining the acquisition process. One of the issues that has been brought up in the past is parking. We believe that of the many sites that we looked at this has among the most favorable parking conditions. You may recall this slide also. What we did for the purpose of walking access to the site is superimpose the Mall of New Hampshire over the Staples site, the gray shaded area of the slide represents the Mall of NH parking lot, and the conclusion that we have come to is that within essentially the same walking distance as the more remote parking spaces at the Mall of NH is adequate parking to support the proposed civic center for a typical event. Having said all of that I want you to bear with me for one more minute for what I consider an opportunity to step back and as a board and as a community look at this issue one last time. I am convinced we are making the right choice and I would like to tell you why. I've thought about this a lot. I've gone back and looked at all twelve sites. If you look at all twelve sites and I think we've exhaustively considered the opportunities in downtown, eight of them at this time clearly don't make sense from our perspective. Starting at the top of the page, I'll skip over the Amory site for a minute, the Public Service Company site on the river in and of itself is not adequate in size without demolishing the existing power plant and related mill building, there are some issues related to demolishing that, that we think should be an important consideration to the city. In addition to which those northern most sites have less than a third the existing

parking capacity as then does the Staples site. Stepping down about a third of the way down the slide to the Bridge Street sites, there are three sites clustered there, Pearl Street, Bridge & Elm and the Wall Street sites. The Pearl Street site is just clearly inadequate in its size without substantial demolition of the surrounding neighborhood, as is the Bridge & Elm Street site. The Bridge & Elm Street site is an acre and a half in size, the footprint of our building alone is more than three acres in size, so you can see that it certainly wouldn't fit on that site. The next site in that cluster is the so called Wall Street site. The building would technically fit on that site without service, without parking, if you demolished all of the existing buildings on that site, we consider that to be an expensive thing to do and impractical from the standpoint of dislocating all of the business that are currently there. Stepping down a bit more along the river we had Pandora, the building won't fit on the Pandora site without demolishing Pandora and the Gateway buildings, we all know that they are currently in a state of redevelopment and even if we were to do that the building is large enough it would have to be cantered out over the river at considerable expense. One site below that is the former centerplex site, a lot of people said why don't we put it back there, the significant difference is that the seating capacity of this building is significantly larger than was the centerplex site and it simply doesn't fit in that horseshoe any longer. Down one more notch, I think we all know where the new Singer soccer field is, and I think it is certainly arguable that it wouldn't make sense given that investment and the role that that's playing along the river to replace that with the civic center there. Lastly we have the South Elm Street site, most remote, least if you will supportive of redevelopment in the central core of the city and again very limited parking, less than a fifth of the parking that is available at the Staples site. That leaves us with four perspective sites. The Amory site, which is adequate in size, which has very limited parking and which has complications relating to having to acquire land and construct a new Amory if it is dislocated at considerable expense. That site we also felt was too remote from what most people would consider to be the central portion of our downtown. That leaves us with the three remaining sites. All clustered around Granite Street, Staples, Hermsdorf and Allen Bradley. The Hermsdorf site is again adequate in size if one were to acquire all of that property at considerable more expense and clear that block of buildings. One of what we believe to be the compromises in that is that neighborhood of buildings is of some architectural significance, is of some historical significance and has the potential to produce significant spin-off redevelopment. Allen Bradley as we know has a very viable active industrial commercial occupant which has considerable employment in the city and it did not seem to us, among other reasons which we won't go into in great detail, practical to dislocate them. In the more than two years that we have been looking at this site, I personally, and there may be others, have only heard two objections to the site. One is related to parking, and as I've pointed out if we have a ten thousand seat sell out for a hockey game, we will be the projections of our parking engineer require approximately 2300 parking spaces. Within that same distance of walking through the Mall of New Hampshire parking lot under existing conditions, we have approximately 3000 parking spaces, so while I can certainly not guarantee you that parking may not be an issue, it will be no more of an issue certainly on this site than it would be on the two neighboring viable sites and we believe it is entirely manageable, and in fact disbursement parking is the most appropriate parking solution if we are to generate downtown activity. The other concern that has been raised is the neighborhood to the east. We have shared I believe as a

design team the sensitivity for that, we have met with representatives of the neighborhood. We have met with police and fire and other officials. We have worked out a plan to eliminate bus traffic on Chestnut Street. We have sound insulated the building to address their concerns. We have focused the activity of the project on the plaza on Elm Street and away from that neighborhood, and we believe that there are viable plans to address parking issues in those neighborhoods. Furthermore, if you look at this plan and see the adjacency of those three core sites those to issues, the issues of parking and impact on the neighborhood would be no different on any one of those three sites than they are on the Staples site. At least not materially different. They are all proximate enough to those neighbors and to the parking so that the issues would remain the same and in fact I would submit to you that those same parking and neighborhood issues would exist regardless of which virtually any of the twelve sites you chose. The simple fact of the matter is that the act of placing a civic center in the inner city in the center city will confront some of those issues. We believe that we can deal with them constructively as the project moves forward to the point of being very successful for everyone involved. In summary based on all that I have pointed out to you and many more extensive studies we have concluded that the staples site is clearly the preferred site for the proposed civic center.

Kevin Clougherty, Finance Director, addressed the Board stating acquisition of the site would be considered a part of the Civic Center project as you know. The Civic Center project would be a public-private partnership. The financing for the Civic Center project would come from two primary sources. The City's annual increment from the State Meals & Rooms Tax would be used to support the public sector portion of the project including the issuance, by the Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority, of insured tax-exempt bonds not to exceed \$50 million and the City's public commitment is capped and cannot exceed 80% of the project costs. The balance of the project would be financed through a private, taxable commitment for a minimum of at least 20% of the project and ideally more, and that would be backed by revenues that would be generated at the facility. The Board has adopted a list of 12 criteria as Skip has said regarding the financing of the Civic Center project, all of which must be met in order for project financing to be approved. If any of the criteria are not met, the staff would not recommend the project for approval.

Robert MacKenzie, Planning Director addressed the Board stating the Planning Board has requested that I provide you with their opinion on the site selection which is the topic of this meeting tonight. The Planning Board has seen presentations by the design team of the project area and at the last meeting on November 18 acted to support the proposed site, and I know the Planning Board Chairman is here tonight to discuss that. I did also want to note in terms of consistency with various plans the 1993 Master Plan which was adopted by the Planning Board, called for the City to pursue the development of a Civic Center it did not have a proposed specific site at that time but did call for it to be developed somewhere in the downtown area. In the same year, 1993, the City completed the Intown Manchester Development Plan. And in that particular plan there was illustrated three potential sites. The illustrated development plan had the civic center on another site, one of those that was evaluated earlier in this presentation. But in that plan it did recognize three potential civic center sites all of them along Granite Street and

Lake Avenue, what's called the "Gateway" district of that plan. One of those three sites recommended in that study is the Staples site, so in terms of consistency the LDR plan, the proposed site is consistent with that LDR plan. Thank you very much.

Mayor Wieczorek advised the Clerk needed to enter a statement for the record.

Deputy Clerk Johnson advised it should be noted that the notice was given in writing, by certified mail, to the owners of record of the property, mortgagees, lessees, tenants and abutters more than thirty (30) days prior to the public hearing.

Mayor Wieczorek called for those wishing to speak advising that due to the number of people wishing to speak he was requesting people do limit their comments to three minutes.

David Altschuler, owner of the Staples site, stated:

I was not the original owner of this property but have been the owner of this property for over thirty years. I would just like to say that it's been a joy to me to own the property for over 30 years. The City of Manchester has always treated us very fairly and so at this particular time, my understanding is that this property has been assessed by the City of Manchester for \$4,775,000.00 and I would like to say which I have said before to the officials here that I am willing to sell this property to the City of Manchester for \$4,000,000.00 in order to make the civic center for the City of Manchester a reality. In any other way that I can be helpful, in any way to make this a reality I am certainly available to do so and would be most eager to do so. Thank you.

Bernie Schacter, Vice President of Real Estate for Staples stated:

I just would like to say that Staples is not here to oppose the civic center project. We are fully prepared to accept whatever decision the aldermen of the City has decided for this property. You may be aware we have just opened a store in Bedford, as a second store and it is doing well. We accelerated our plans to open a store there. We had always hoped to open a second store in the Bedford market. That being said we would certainly prefer to serve the Manchester market from Manchester, and after searching for well over a year knowing that this project was coming we have not found an alternative in downtown Manchester or elsewhere. Therefore if the civic center site ends up on this so-called Staples site, we do not have a replacement store at this time. Therefore in conclusion, Staples wants to serve the Manchester market and its customers that have served us well for over the years and although it would be a loss for Staples and more than anything our associates who work in the store, we would hope to eventually find another location in Manchester to serve our customers. Thank you.

Mayor Wieczorek stated thank you. Mr. Taylor your next charge is to find a location for Staples in Manchester.

Allen Gutzmer, of Wadleigh Law Firm at 95 Market Street stated:

I am here representing Michael Capos owner of 533 Elm Street which is the building, one of the buildings in the little I guess you could say cut out or niche that would have made the proposed site a rectangle. It's in the little area on Elm Street that's not being proposed to be taken by eminent domain as part of the project. Mr. Capos has some concerns dealing with taking the site

as it is proposed. He is an abutter to it. It was stated earlier in the presentation dealing with necessary parking of 2300 spaces, that's assuming more than four persons per vehicle would attend an event. I think it's a little conservative, average would be more like 3 to 4 and that would require 2500 to 3300 spaces. It was also said earlier that 3,000 spaces are within the area outlined by the boundaries of the Mall of New Hampshire, therefore if three people come in each vehicle you need 300 more spaces than are available in that distance. Basically, getting down to the point it looks like there is probably not enough parking. The issue, getting into tonight's issue, where would parking go if it needed to be built. Probably in that little notch. It's the most obvious space. The little notch where my client's building is. 533 Elm and the buildings adjacent to it. Currently this Board and the developers, everyone is considering just taking the L shaped piece but why are we not considering the other notch, and are we being honest with ourselves in the possibility of having to take that. That is my client's concern, is that 2,3, 5 years down the road his building is going to be at risk to be taken by eminent domain for necessary parking. Not only does he run a hair salon there, he runs a school for hairstyling which has 70 to 100 students at many times, all of which are future entrepreneurs and business people in this city. You are running the risk of closing down a salon, closing down a school, cutting off a very good vocational training for young men and women, as well as there is a Mineke shop as a lessee to his building and you would shut down that perhaps too. That is just one of four buildings in that little notch. I think everybody needs to consider are we being conservative with our estimates given the \$50 million cap and all of the other restrictions we have on us, are we ignoring what may come in the future. My client is not, it is his livelihood that is at risk and he is very concerned that we are missing the big picture and what may happen in the future. All of which will remove jobs and future potential businesses from the city in the form of his businesses, his lessees, and the students. And that's not even addressing the other three buildings in that notch. There are possibly other better sites, better uses for the money that's earmarked to spend on this project.

Sal Steven-Hubbard, Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services, 434 Union Street stated:

I am here tonight to represent Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services, which works in the center city area and also is an abutter through our ownership interest and buildings on Chestnut and Auburn Street. Manchester NHS has not taken a position regarding the civic center. However, since the Staples site has been chosen we've raised the following issues. Number one, parking. The current proposal calls for all the visitors to civic center events to use off site parking. While the proposal maintains that there is plenty of parking downtown, we are concerned about parking impacts on the neighborhood in which we work. Specifically we are worried that the substantial numbers of event goers will choose free parking in the adjacent residential neighborhood, thereby taking up scarce parking for neighborhood residents and businesses. The traffic impact is another concern in that many event goers will choose local streets to reach the civic center. Specifically Lake Avenue, Hanover Street, Beech and Maple Streets will be overwhelmed by civic center traffic. Neighborhood residents might find it exceedingly difficult to get to home or leave there residents during event days. We have an additional concern regarding crowd control. If indeed significant numbers of event goers park

in the neighborhood, the neighborhood will have to deal with large crowds going to and from events. Noise, trash, and public drunkenness could all be generated by the crowds. Lastly we have a concern regarding economic development impact. The civic center is expected to generate economic activities. Many of these activities are expected to be restaurants and bars. We are concerned that these activities will spread into the residential parts of the neighborhood, negatively impacting the quality of life. Again, we are not opposed to the civic center as such, simply feel that these issues need to be dealt with prior to final approval of the taking of the site. We feel like they probably can be resolved. We feel like they should be resolved. And we are willing to work to help resolve them.

Jeff Michelson, 45 Falls Avenue, Manchester stated:

I would like to thank Aldermen Clancy, Shea and Cashin for standing firmly against this project and the site itself, for not waffling. For not hiding behind the referendum and for not hiding behind buzz words like parameters. What we have here members of the Board, both the site and this project, is what my dear mom used to refer to as a "pig in a poke." That is buying something sight unseen. It's an offering that is foolishly accepted without being looked at first. We are buying a pick in a poke here. We doing it with our money with a gun pointed at our heads. You people know better. Don't listen to your hearts if you think that, you may in fact be listening to your hearts thinking that you are doing the right thing for Manchester, but I urge you to listen to your heads. Thank you.

Mark Taylor, 78 Esty Avenue, stated:

I like pork and I'd like to buy a pig. I like the site in the downtown. I don't want to see too many issues brought up in terms of traffic flow and parking because one of the big things we want as an economic developer is traffic tying up so people would actually prefer to go into a restaurant for pizza instead of hopping in their car and leaving. If parking does become an issue, I do suggest that you start looking at Canal Street as being underutilized with two lanes north, two lanes south and to me it would be a relative easy matter to make it one lane north, one lane south, add one strip parking lot all the way from one end of the millyard to the other which would address parking in downtown for the millyard development and also for events at night. Thank you.

Bill Marvin, Chair, Board of Directors, Chamber of Commerce, and resident, 887 Chestnut Street, stated:

The Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce is a civic minded organization comprised of over 1200 businesses that are committed to improving the economic health and quality of life in our region. As you know from prior knowledge here, the Great Manchester Chamber of Commerce has been a strong supporter of the proposed civic center. In a recent political season the civic center seemed to be a topic of much campaign rhetoric and the victim of some misinformation. I'm here tonight on behalf of the Chamber Board of Directors, and majority of Manchester voters who approved the civic center referendum question last fall to reiterate our

belief that the project should move forward and be built at the proposed location at the corner of Lake Avenue and Elm Street. Our city is on the verge of many exciting accomplishments. We truly have a bright future ahead of us. Riverfront development, recreational trails, state university in the millyard, Stark Street redevelopment, the Hackett Hill Commercial park and other infrastructure improvements are investments in our community that will reap benefits such as an increased tax base, business expansion, and job creation for years to come. An independent expert analysis of possible locations in Manchester determined that the Staples site was the most suited for the civic center. Other locations have been suggested and evaluated, but Staples was the site that ranked highest among a number of criteria as shown by Mr. Brensinger. We believe the experts selected the best location. The civic center should be downtown and thus yield the best beneficial impact to our city. We at the Chamber continually here from employers waiting with great anticipation for this project to happen. They know that a civic center located at the corner of Elm and Lake Ave would increase business, increase profits and increase jobs. We know of several chamber members who plan to expand their businesses if the civic center is built at the proposed site. The civic center, at the Staples site, in downtown Manchester, will bring world class family entertainment to our city, increase property values, and be the catalyst for true downtown redevelopment and bring a sense of pride to our community. Within a few weeks you will be asked to consider moving into the construction phase for this project. If the financing comes together before the end of the year, I and the Chamber Board of Directors strongly encourage you, as a majority of Manchester voters did, to move this project forward. Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

Chris Dodd, 181 Mammoth Road, Ward 6, stated:

I grew up in Manchester, just returned to Manchester a few months ago after serving four years in the United States Air Force. Upon my return I was disgusted by the current dealings going on with the civic center. I was so disgusted that I decided to write a paper for college called "The Manchester Civic Center, The Wrong Choice for Manchester." This paper all of you should have received in your mailbox today. The recipients of this paper were Mayor-Elect Robert Baines, four incoming aldermen, Manchester Union Leader, Nashua Telegraph, Concord Monitor, Portsmouth Herald, New England Cable News, and the Governor of New Hampshire. I don't think the majority of you are taking this matter seriously. The price on civic center has risen from \$57 million to \$68 million.

Mayor Wieczorek requested Mr. Dodd confine his remarks to the site.

Mr. Dodd continued stating he also attended a meeting last week, the Department of Transportation held at West High School, during that meeting it was found out that a \$10 to \$12 million from city money was needed to improve streets leading up to the Staples site, particularly the Granite Street bridge, with that including the \$68 million the price tag has gone up to \$80 million. I would also like to speak about a November 4, article in the Manchester Union Leader and I would like to quote Mr. Pariseau and a statement he made. This in regards to Mayor-Elect Baines urging a second look at the downtown site for the civic center. Mr. Pariseau stated "I don't think he should be involved in the process. He'll have his chance in January." Well Mr. Pariseau I'm sorry you believe that. I believe every citizen of Manchester has a right in decisions that are made regarding this civic center. I'm urging you all to take a

second look at this site. Right now, there is no information on how this bond is going to be fully insured. There is no guarantee against operating deficits. There is also no information regarding on whether or not if this civic center does die where the money is going to come from. I urge you to look at that paper I gave to you all, read through the memorandums of understanding and take a second look at this site. This site is the wrong site for Manchester.

Gary Frost, 89 Lovering Street, Ward 6, stated:

I've been following the proceedings relative to the civic center for the 2 years and 9 months and have been very interested in watching the process. I truly believe that the individuals who have been charged with developing this process have done diligent work and worked very hard in putting together all of the criteria that the Board had asked for. I do believe that the selection of the Staples site is the appropriate site. There was a lot of time and energy and effort going into the selection of this site. I think anybody that did not follow these efforts over the past two years and nine months should take a look at that because everything that was asked of that group seems to be put into place at this point and I certainly
Manchester 4 years air force – wrote paper why Manchester should have a civic center

David Boutin, 105 Brae Burn Drive, Ward 1; Chair, Manchester Planning Board stated:

The Planning Board has seen this project on a couple of difference occasions. It has had an opportunity to review it and consider all of the site impacts. Much the same way that we consider the site impacts of all developments that occur throughout the city. Having heard the presentation I can report to you that the Planning Board voted unanimously to support the site that the Board is considering tonight. I would just tell you that the members of the Planning Board are volunteers and we take our work dispassionately. We don't get involved in one side or the other, we look at the issues and we are concerned with the impacts that the projects have on the city's neighborhoods. And when we look at these impacts with regards to this site, we came to the conclusion that it would be only upside for the downtown area. And if I may just say one thing and that is there has been some comments made that this project would result in a new restaurants and pubs and so forth and so on in the civic center area, and I just want to point out to the board that the area behind the civic center proposed site is zoned R-3 and R-4. And what that means is that it is zoned for multiple family use, commercial uses of the sorts that some folks have suggested would occur are not allowed. And I don't think that our Zoning Board, which does a very fine job for this city, is going to come in and turn that neighborhood upside down. In conclusion I would say on behalf of myself and the Planning Board we very strongly support this site location for the proposed civic center.

Lionel Leblanc, 203 Belmont Street, Ward 1, stated:

I am vehemently opposed to this civic center. I don't want this mammoth white elephant in Manchester. That's why I am opposed to where you are going to the present location for where you have it set up now. If you need a location, and you can't find any, we won't have a civic center. I've been paying taxes for 47 years. Lately, we finally got a tax break. Big deal, one

percent. For the last 10 years you add it all up. This rooms and meals tax that we should be getting is never getting to us. We haven't got it so far back, we would have actually got a good tax break. I see people from other towns and cities and they are celebrating over their tax breaks. I want to thank the aldermen that voted for this tax break, but I'm against the ones that voted against the break in taxes we should have had. We are the taxpayers and we have rights to oppose it, and I am opposing it tonight.

Richard Borrazas, 459 Central Street, stated:

I just wanted to express my approval of the Staples site. I think it is centrally located. I think the parking issues have been addressed. I believe it's going to raise the property values of downtown back to where they should be and I believe it's the right step forward to bring Manchester back to what it once was. Thank you.

Raymond Houle, 200 Parkview Street, stated:

I would like to voice my support for the site as it is proposed. I am a property owner in the historic area. I am in the line of path between the civic center and the parking garage at Hampshire Plaza. I know it will make more traffic, more people, but I think its good for activity. If a city does not have people going by a store, if a city does not have life, it dies. And I think Manchester has had its dark days in the past and I think its good to have activities nearby where our children, our senior young people, can go to ice arenas and go locally close by for activities. I hope all of you will consider, reconsider those of you who are on the fence, to support this site and to support the civic center. Thank you.

Harold Sullivan, 93 Juniper Street, stated:

After sitting here watching the presentation that Barry Brensinger put on this evening, I'm not sure why anybody who would doubt that a professional, having done the job that he did in reviewing all of the sites would have anything but the utmost of motives in selecting the best site for the City of Manchester. I think that it's time that we trust the professionals and go with their guidance, they have suggested the Staples site as the best site and I urge all of you to vote in favor of the site.

Carol Lacroix, Dean, University of New Hampshire- Manchester, stated:

I'd like to speak in favor of the civic center and the proposed location. Where the civic center is being proposed is a very accessible location that could draw the 19,000 college students here in Manchester from the nine different locations of our college very easily to this accessible area. The other important part of this location that I think is most promising is the fact that it is very visible and would become a very important part of the Elm Street area. It's important in our area colleges to be able to attract and retain students, and I think having a civic center that is so vibrant and so part of the community and so visible in this particular location will really send a very strong message to potential students who are coming here to college so they will know that

this is a very exciting place to be and there is a downtown area where some very wonderful things will be happening. Thank you.

Gerry Vachon, Rivervbank Road, Ward 8, stated:

Before I make my comments I would like to ask one question as a point of order. Is it right that the proponents of the civic center get at length to give their presentation, and when you get the opposition a chance to speak they only get three minutes where they can't even touch on the subject at hand. We are talking about parking or the impact, but every citizen here has a comment that really means something to them and with three minutes to give it I think that's wrong because the proponents were given at length to give their statement, that they already gave to all of you in meetings. WE don't need it now we know what we want to do here. Is that fair to give three minutes.

Mayor Wieczorek stated that they would not get into a dialogue because that was not the purpose of the meeting. It is to give people an opportunity to speak so that the aldermen could hear. But the city had to make their statement so people would understand what went into the selection of the site.

Mr. Vachon stated I would just like to make a couple of remarks. We heard from the Chamber of commerce that the people spoke at the election for the civic center. That was a non-binding question. That was politics as usual. You didn't want to take a chance for a no vote because you never would have had it. On the issue of chlorine you put a referendum question, a couple of million dollar project a referendum question, a \$50 million project and it's a non-binding referendum. Where is the common sense in that was the people speaking. The other thing that we talk about is the bond issue backing this thing up. And that's my important thoughts right now of this whole thing. I am not against the civic center if it is done right, but the bond issue is like an insurance company and an insurance company if they go bankrupt do we have a guarantee that we have another one that is going to pick up the bond or are we going to pick up the tab.

Mayor Wieczorek advised that this was not a hearing on the civic center but on the site.

Mr. Vachon responded that the Bond means everything to the site. You are the one that talked about parameters and I think that has to be brought up. Thank you very much.

Doug Whitfield, 14 Windsong Ave, stated:

I had a very eloquent speak on my opposition to the whole project which I guess I can't make according to your opinions but I think this whole project needs to be re-evaluated, I think the bonding issue, I think you have heard some very eloquent speeches from people who are looking at personal gain, you are looking at the merchants of the city of Manchester a great percentage who don't live here and would be more than willing to let the taxpayers sacrifice those funds to buy this location to put a project at the expense of our education system. Those moneys that should be there from the rooms and meals tax which should be coming back and taking care

some of the education problems. I think the Union Leader this week said we are now finding we need to spend a 120,000,000 dollars on additional school facilities in the city and we are worried about trying to provide eloquent facilities so people can come to a hockey game here, but you'll catch on after and that bonding issue, I think they said we would pay 80% if this thing fails, the taxpayer's going to pay 80% if thing goes down the shoot.

Mayor Wiczorek requested he confine remarks to the site.

Mr. Whitefield stated it was all part of the same dollars. We buy the site and then we can't build it. I am opposed to the site because the site brings on all of these other problems; no site no project, no expense to the taxpayer, that's my opinion, thank you.

Billy Dodd, 181 Mammoth Road, stated:

Point of order, if a subject was brought up for the presentation for the people that were for the civic center then that subject can be touched on by comments here. One of the things that was brought up was that it was going to increase property values in downtown, which will therefore increase taxes. Well, guess what. In your memorandum of understanding, if you guys have read them, in August of 1998 the Staples site was valued at \$3.2 million. In September of 1999 it was valued at \$4.7 million. We haven't done a thing downtown and it went up a million and one half dollars. So, you don't have to do anything to make property values go up downtown. Mr. Ashoo stated that the parking garages are empty. So they are going to be full when you have a civic center, and we are going to get revenue out of it. But, guess what, in the memorandum of understanding you have to pay Ogden Entertainment \$150,000 out of our revenue from the parking garages. Civic center, is it going to be the golden goose. How many redevelopment projects have you done downtown that were suppose to be exactly that that haven't materialized. Eminent domain. Imminent domain is the taking of private property for the public use and not for the taking for private use. One of the presenters stated that the civic center would have a little park out front that would be used for public use, and that is the only thing I have heard about this project for public use. Otherwise, a lot of people are going to make money. Determining the purpose of a property being condemned as a public use the courts will consider the extent to which the proposed project will benefit the public. The net benefit to the public will consist of the benefits of the proposed project reduced by the social costs of the project. If the social costs exceed the probable benefits, then the project is not built for public use and in such a case the true benefits of the project will occur only to its private sponsors and participants in the use of the power of eminent domain will violate the public use requirements. If you guys are going to take this thing under the housing development authority for eminent domain, RSA 205:3, unless I'm reading it differently, relating to slum clearances and housing projects for persons of low income. I don't know how, I mean we are collecting \$160,000 on the Staples site now. I don't think that's low income. The financing was touched on. \$50 million in bonds was going to be paid for out of the meals and room return from the state. The \$15 million that is being taken out from a bank is a private loan. That money to repay that is suppose to be coming from the luxury suites and the 600 club suites, but if you guys read your

memorandum of understanding, the city only gets 20% of the luxury suite money. The rest of that money is going to private individuals, corporation and a hockey team. This is not the best site, you have 34 acres up at the industrial park that would not need all the additional parking garages and road building. It's a bad site.

Bob Dastin, 2600 Elm Street, stated:

Historically Mayor when you approached me in late 1994-1995 to head up a committee that was known as the centerplex committee I was absolutely convinced and I think Barry Brensinger was at the time too that the site down in the millyard, the so-called MKF site was the site. It has visibility. We had access to the turnpike, but you know it really lacked one thing, and that was that people would probably come there and leave from there and that over the course of the last two or three years, Skip Ashoo and Barry and others have made a very compelling case it would seem to me, that this civic center if it happens, and I hope it does, ought be downtown.

Anecdotally I have clients in downtown Lowell, and I was visiting them a week or ten days ago and it happened to be the night of a hockey game. And Lowell was alive and it was vibrant, there were people walking the streets, they are not just young people, they were older people, shops were open, restaurants were open, there was even a few bar rooms that were open. But the place was alive. It was vibrant. Things were happening. Shops had been refurbished. The boutiques were open. Where was the location of this civic center in Lowell, downtown. I'm convinced that the site that's being recommended is the site for the civic center and I would hope that the Board would unanimously approve the site and issue the bonds come December 7.

Walter Stiles, 226 Sagamore Street, stated:

I am a resident of 27 year resident of 226 Sagamore Street. I am very bullish on Manchester. Now you know this city has been through one heck of period, many tough periods down through the years. I remember on December 24, 1935 when the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company went bankrupt. The city was flat. It was really down and out. I also remember the 1936 flood. And after that flood it was out even more. And then I also remember the 1938 hurricane and I delivered my papers up on Pine Crest and I got every paper delivered and we got through and we accomplished what we wanted to accomplish. And I'm bullish on the area down here in the Staples area. I don't think we want to blow it again, ladies and gentlemen. I think that you remember the fracas we had regarding Jordan Marsh. Well Jordan Marsh might well have been on South Elm Street but we had difficulties in those days and it ended up in Bedford. So let's not blow it again. I love the airport, every time an airplane flies over I say there's a real benefit as far as taxes are concerned. The airport's a great thing. They are building a 5,000 car parking garage down at the airport. Now, there is one thing we've got to do ladies and gentlemen, I think all of us need to do more walking. You can't get every car right at the front door of the civic center. So I love to walk myself, and I don't mind walking from my house down to city hall or down to the civic center, and I think it will help the health of the people in the city of Manchester if they do a little walking. I want to leave you with one little saying and this saying was on the blackboard of Straw School when I graduated from Straw School in 1936. And the

saying said the world is full of the possible but you've got to fight to win it. And you do have to fight to win it, and I think the civic center is possible and I think it will be a success. Thank you.

John Latimer, 319 Coral Ave, stated:

I've attended the public meeting that were appropriate to the site selection process. I've read everything that's been available on it. I've talked to the people that have been involved and I would like to express my support as a local business person and resident that this is the place to build a civic center. Thank you.

Sylvio Dupuis, 451 Coolidge Avenue, stated:

I'm a former city employee. At this point I would be glad to seed my time to Walter Stiles. In a more serious vein, neither this site nor any other site that you could propose is appropriate if you don't want to build a civic center. But I think if you do want to build a civic center, if you want to enter the new millenium with a dynamic and vibrant city, this site will do it as well as any other site that you could consider. If the Board of Mayor and Aldermen think that this is an expense to the city, then they should vote against it. If they believe that this is an investment in the future of our city and something that will benefit our children and our grandchildren, then I would urge them to vote for it. And I speak both for myself and my wife Cecile she is in ardent support of the site also.

Don Welch, 147 Boutwell Street, stated:

I think most of you here are old enough to recognize the economic development projects we've had in this city. They didn't have video tape back then to probably review those tapes, but we do have newsprint to review what the aldermanic boards and the comments from the public, in past economic development projects in Manchester. Hampshire Plaza, Center of New Hampshire, 540 Commercial Street, Wall Street Towers, if you look at the millions and millions of dollars that were pumped into these so called economic development projects, and take a walk down with Walter Stiles right down Elm Street, and remember what the proponents of those projects were saying then. This was going to be a vibrant city when we got done building Hampshire Plaza. This was going to be a vibrant city when we got done building the Center of New Hampshire. Wall Street Towers. I lived there for a year. This has nothing to do with the civic center. This site, this whole concept of a civic center. It's about finance people making millions of dollars. It's about insurance people making millions of dollars. It's about the real estate industry making millions of dollars. Fire. I hope that this aldermanic board puts out this fire. Thank you.

Murray Onigman, 324 Walnut Street, stated:

I got a big kick out of the fact that Attorney Dastin said the best entrance to the centerplex was beautiful. But that Mr. Ashoo convinced him how great this would be for downtown Manchester, that dead end street that goes no where north and goes no where south. Now I had

the pleasure in my working lifetime to spend five years at Fenway Park and one year at the Boston Garden. With whom. The Boston Bruins. You getting the Boston Bruins. We're not getting the Boston Bruins here are we guys. Now, servicing that area comparing this location, we have to stay on that subject, was an underground elevated trains that came from north south east and west both to north station, the Boston Garden, Fenway Park, Commonwealth Avenue, Beacon Street the other way. They are all serviced by underground. Now this is the best location. The last time they had runners on Elm Street about three weeks ago, one guy couldn't get his car out of that garage for close to an hour. He went home and came back and finally got his car out. So we're thinking of a garage for that area. We are going to tear down the two senior buildings and build a garage in back, what are you going to do, where are you going to put that garage so that the people can go and watch the hockey game like the Manchester Black Hawks. And that's the grade team you are going to get. Manchester Black Hawks. I worked for a major league team. Boston Bruins. There is a difference. So here you are on Elm Street with a new location and they are talking about the retail business is going to get business. Really now. I was at both edifices and including the garden nobody ever went to any of those bar joints, booze joints, or Joe Animos after the game. But what are you going to attract if you build on Elm Street this building. Let not the lost Mayor and Aldermen throw a public building value worth more than the Mall of New Hampshire into bankruptcy. Let it not be known that the last Mayor and Aldermen of this century threw us into bankruptcy because you are not sending out one property tax bill.

Steve Vaillancourt, 161 Faith Lane, stated:

It's indeed an honor to be here and to speak to you after we've been told by so many people to trust the professionals that are working on this. Well, I feel like I am the last conservative left in the country. One of our most conservative senators tell us that we are about ready to have an income tax, and when that conservative bastion of newspapers the Union Leader says we should throw all this money at this project. So as the last conservative, I would like to speak about trust. Wasn't it Ronald Reagan that great conservative president who said trust but verify. Well I'm here tonight to ask you not to trust the professionals but to get verification for everything that they have given you. And, I've got a couple of reasons, a couple of handouts why you should do that. Don't trust Chris Morgan and Sheer Stern Development, Inc. because they are selling the seats for this building without even being incorporated with the Secretary of State. I asked Bill Gardner that here today up at the Secretary of State's office. They haven't even registered yet. And should you trust the Manchester Development Corporation. Raymond Pinard who has filed under Evil Empire, L.L.C. saying that his purpose of his LLC is the acquisition of rights as a licensee and the marketing of private suites for the Manchester Civic Center. Is that the kind of thing you should trust, or you should look into it before you go any farther. And speaking of looking into things, maybe you should look into the City Charter, and I refer you to Section 9.03, Subsection e), Conflict of Interest: No city official shall participate in the decision-making process of any matter in which the official or a member of the official's immediate family has a direct personal or financial interest. And then if you go back to read the definition of financial interest it talks about direct or indirect concern not shared by the public at

large. Would that mean that if you own property in the area you have a conflict of interest. If you have a restaurant in the area, or maybe a little stand that sells something in the area, you have a conflict of interest. Billy Dodd has pointed out brilliantly why you should not trust these people who claim to be giving you such a great bargain by saying they are going to give you something for \$4 million when we know it was only valued at \$3 million awhile ago, so that is in fact not about this particular site. And what about the money that it is going to cost the city of Manchester. Your property tax rate for the municipal portion went up 27.6% this past year. If you buy this site, and if you develop this property, it'll mean another dollar on your tax rate. And finally, Kevin Clougherty mentioned that great phrase tonight public/private partnership. In my final seconds just by chance I happened to find Louis Rukeyser's Book, you'll have to read it, I'll leave you copies of it, but William Simon, one of distinguished economists talks about the boondoggle of private/public partnerships. I'll leave this all for you. Thank you.

George Chaprass, 69 Lucille Street, stated:

In Watergate, I think that was a republican thing. Deep throat said to the reporters follow the money. Follow the money. Can we do that here. Can we follow the money. That was an aside. I never have claimed to be as bright as everyone seems to think I look. In some things in fact I am more than a little slow. For example, I can't seem to figure out just why you might be buying the construction site before deciding whether to build the hockey rink. Of course there is a cemetery just across the street and it's more than a city block wide. That's a lively place. And if we don't build the hockey rink, we can always expand the cemetery. That'll be lively. And if we do build the hockey rink, and if the home team really kills the visitors, then the nearby cemetery may prove very handy. Of all the criteria, 20% private interest, no operating deficit, what about maintenance. What are you going to do, figure out the criteria after you buy the site. My goodness. We have hear pep talks tonight. Decide the goal then shape the talk. That's a pep talk. The dean of the University of New Hampshire's pep talk tonight was a good example. And, Father what's his name the president of St. Anselm's gave a nice pep talk the other time. And you heard a lot of pep talks from the Chamber of Commerce and all the big people giving pep talks because their wallets are aching. Well, so be it. Please slow down, we can do it next year.

John Stancik, 1039 Hall Street, Ward 2, stated:

I'm just another little country boy. Is it naïve of me to ask why we want to buy the land first. Or are we going to buy the land first. If we approve this will we be buying the land before we approve the civic center to be built. I heard that the owner wants to sell. Won't the eminent domain proceeding be a more costly procedure, than selling or just purchasing it outright from a willing seller. I thought that was what real estate was all about. I cannot support the acquisition of the land. In serious matters, jokes about sites at public hearings and finding private companies such as Staples a place to relocate may just backfire in courts of law. The site is more suitable for the casino that's going to be needed as we get around to finding out what's going to pay these education tax bills, and in particular municipal bills, which increased I think

by 29%. If we don't build the silly center, I mean the civic center, will the property be sold by the city if we happen to buy it, and to who. If the civic center is not built, I contend that the city bureaucracy will be unable to manage what it already has if they own it. And you must consider that this is a distinct possibility, the city's inability to manage things as an example I ask you at least those of you who own property taxes on your current bills to check the actual interest rate that has been calculated. The site is going to be unable to be managed if you do not build a civic center there. You haven't approved the civic center. And telling you why that site is going to be unable to be managed. Because your property tax bills are interest amounts on currently owed taxes are not being calculated properly. They are more than 12%, exactly 12.045%. Thank you.

Gary Laraba, 97 South Hall Street, stated:

I want to say that I am definitely in favor and in support of the civic center and its philosophy, but I am opposed the proposed location, being the corner of Lake Ave and Elm Street. Why am I opposed. Parking. I don't believe that the parking is adequate. If any of us were to go anyplace, the Mall of New Hampshire, Macy's maybe the movies, would all of us pick up three people to go with us. In the proposal it was stated that the civic center is supposed to house 10,000 people. Suggesting 2500 parking spaces. That is 25% of 10,000 or 4 people in a car. I know I don't. What Manchester does here will be broadcast across our state and beyond. Any image we might make here in Manchester is to be effected by how we display our decisions. Other points of interest. Points of egress and entrance. Where that is located it is not going to be easy to get in and get out. Look at the Everette Turnpike how far away is it. It's going to be probably 2500 cars plus getting on to Elm Street getting out. It is not going to be a comfortable situation. I'm concerned about our neighbors. I'm going to suggest that many of them may not be in our lifestyle, may not be as affluent as we might be, perhaps relatively speaking poorer. Maybe not being able to come up with the admission fee. Yet they are seeing all of us more wealthy people going to the civic center in their neighborhood. I'm very much opposed to that. I'm getting into marketing. That's my biggest hangup. How are we going to market this place. How many of us go downtown to look around. Not too frequently. How many outsiders, people from other parts of our state, people from other states go down to that area to see what the civic center might be. No marketing. What does that suggest. We are going to be marketing in the newspaper, on TV, hanging signs, a lot of distant marketing. But I have a thought. There was another consideration, the Singer Park. If I'm correct in saying this and I'm not a politician but I believe Mr. Singer would love to have his name across the front of this arena. I think that is not a bad idea. The city could work with Mr. Singer to consider using the properties that he already has, adding more to it, building a complex down there and maybe having a complex times two, an inside complex like this arena would be and an outside complex like what Mr. Singer has already presented, I think it would be an awesome site. Plus from the Everette Turnpike heading north and south it would be very visible. The right building, the right signage, there's your marketing structure. Right off the Everette Turnpike. Points of egress and entrance right off the highway. It would be possible. I'm starting to expand, I thank you very much for your time.

Steve McMahon, 268 Ridge Road, stated:

A year ago we had the referendum, a year ago the majority of the people voted in favor of this site, voted in favor of the civic center. And as Barry so eloquently spoke tonight, the professionals have done all the homework. It makes all the sense in the world. I think one thing that's missed in the last many months is the importance of the economic development this thing brings. The discussion just gets into hockey rinks, this can do so much for our downtown, and this site is the best site clearly that the pros have come up with to show where we can do that development so I speak in favor of supporting it. Thank you.

Grace Freije, 268 Ridge Road, stated:

I first would like to thank Mayor Wieczorek for putting his support behind this and his commitment, also to Barry and Skip, they've done an unbelievable job. We've been working on this project for some time now and I am simple here tonight to state my support to say that with the improvements that have been going on in the millyard, and in the river front Manchester is starting to have a pulse. And I think with the acquisition of this land, at the Staples site, Manchester could possibly even get a heartbeat. And so I'm here to support it and I would urge you to move with the process of taking the land by right of eminent domain.

Mayor Wieczorek recognized the Clerk to present a letter.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated that the clerk was requested to present a letter that was delivered to the office by a gentleman who was unable to attend this evening for reasons. The communication was in outline form and the Deputy Clerk read as follows:

Specifics why the Staples Site is the right site to build the proposed civic center on.

Before any construction can be approved or any site acquired, every condition without exception set forth by the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen must be met.

Why I think the Staples site is the right choice for the civic center subject to the above.

1. Central location – availability to existing major highway and future planned systems.
2. Friendly taking – agreed to appraisers price then donating \$750,000 back to the City. No relocation costs.
3. Site does not require piling – concrete mat will support structure – considerable saving in construction costs in comparison to other sites.
4. Nearby elderly will not be affected by constant noise of pile drivers. Might even enjoy being “sidewalk superintendents” from comfort of nearby park.
5. Brings overall cost projections to point where local consortium of banks has agreed to underwrite construction loan thereby saving several million dollars and keeping investment of a city one (making local banks a part of it).
6. Ideal location to encourage needed upper class restaurants and other satellite type establishments that would certainly flourish and grow the economic vitality of downtown exactly where needed the most.

This is your chance lovers of Manchester, to give yourself a real present for the future. Let's all march forward heads up, faces forward into the millennium with courage and faith in future of our beloved city of Manchester – let's keep it #1.

S/Charlie Pace, 519 Bridge Street

Mayor Wiczorek announced that there has been no formal vote taken by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on the acquisition of this site. That is still to come.

Bill MacKenzie, Tipping Rock Road, Goffstown, stated:

It's not a part of the city. I had read a note that the Manchester Housing Authority will be involved in the process in one form or another. Of course, as a result of that we have really the federal government involved in this so-called maybe local issue. And that invites participation from all taxpayers. No matter where they are in the United States in fact. I opposed the Center of New Hampshire when the Manchester Housing Authority arbitrarily was given the name of John and Helen Philopolous to develop the center. And I've spoken to a number of you over the years about the deal that went on there. It was after the fact that they were recommended by the Boston Redevelopment Authority, the Manchester Housing Authority and the deal started to go into full action that all the benefits accrued to John and Helen to the tune of over \$20 million, so that by the time that project was completed John and Helen went back to Massachusetts most likely I'm sure with money hanging out of their pockets. In the very end the furniture the state financing authority to allow the furniture tax credit type of item. I would like to urge you and the opponents as happened so many bureaucratically conceived projects is to wait until you have all the benefits of this project lined up on an item list. If there is going to be a purchase of the property at x number of dollars, is it going to transfer into the developers hands at the same price. If not it's going to be lower in some fashion and that should be part of the list. Go right on down the list and cost the site development costs, the underground development costs if there are any such as what the garage at the center, all of those costs were really basically gifts at a time when the interest rates were 18% to the home buyer, John and Helen got a give equal to about 1.5% interest rate for the rental charges in the garage. An issue that I went to court on was the fact that John and Helen, inside the documents gave John and Helen the rights, their option at their sole discretion, to exercise an option to convert their monthly rental payments, in very low effective interest rate, into mortgage payments and thereby own that garage. And so we went from the superior court here in town up to the supreme court and the judge kept asking what are they going to pay for it. I believe it's still owned by the city, I'm not sure. But anyway I would urge you and the opponents to list all the benefits that are going to accrue to any particular developer, then take those benefits and list them so you go back to the market place and offer the project to the best bidder. Then you will be in full compliance with the New Hampshire Constitution, Article 83, Part 2, whereby every citizen is entitled in the current and essential benefit of free and fair competition, thereby reducing corruption to a minimum. Give it out to the market place.

Michael Porter, 8 Foxwood Circle, stated:

I was a little bit late because I was at home feeding my daughter. I wasn't going to come down here initially tonight because I figured here is another public meeting with the same people speaking over and over again. But I did decide to type something up. I'm not necessarily against the civic center itself. I think that it would revitalize the city of Manchester, but I am opposed to the location at Staples. The problem with the current proposed site is twofold. Increased traffic congestion in an already congested downtown, and the probable impact on the area residents. The residents in the area surrounding the proposed site are some of the most socio-economically disadvantaged citizens of our city. They are the poor and the elderly. These residents were already handed a hard blow several years ago as you well know when the grocery store left. Zayre's department store left. Leaving these residents to rely on the bus service to do their shopping for their day to day needs and I stress needs, not wants but needs. Life is already hard for these individuals. Some of the poor, some of the elderly. Many of whom have the arduous task of making frequent buying trips to and from shopping centers. While most people may not be displaced, one person displaced is one person too many. And we all need to take a hard look at that. The landlords in the area, as you all know, have raised their rents drastically. Some of those landlords I heard speak tonight and of course they are for this location, it's going to increase their property values. We have numerous citizens in this city who are working two and three jobs just to make ends meet. Do you think they are going to go down to the staples site and see disney on ice. I don't think so. They are going to be impacted tremendously. Walk the area. Walk Spruce Street. Walk Lake Ave. Walk Cedar Street. Walk these streets folks, go down if you dare, literally. I won't park my car down there. There is no way. And I am not trying to be sarcastic but that's the truth. Most of us can drive home tonight and relax, because we know that civic center is not going in our back yard. I don't think we have heard from any residents in that area. Maybe they are too afraid to speak, maybe some just can't come here. In closing I would like to say that a decision has to be made. We have an airport which is a wonderful airport but it has caused tremendous traffic problems on Brown Ave. We haven't even solved those issues yet. Never mind creating new traffic problems downtown. Thank you.

Ken Rhodes, owner of business at 540 Commercial Street, Auburn resident, stated:

I'd like to leave you with three thoughts and three words. Commitment, vision and flexibility. And just for a few moments. Commitment. We sit in our office and we are involved in a lot of projects as you folks know in the city of Manchester and a lot of the people who come to this city who'd like to do projects and like to participate only really want to know one thing. Does the decision making process in this town come to a conclusion. Does it make a decision, stick with it, move forward, and live with all of the things that move forward from there. That's all they ask. And I think at this particular point you've had a site search, at this particular time that site search has come down to this particular location. It is in the center city. There's a lot of center city projects around this nation that have proven that they have become economic development projects. I took my son out to Cleveland, Ohio this year and went to a ball game and it was a wonderful experience. So all that being said I think the site is the right site. Vision.

If you folks have a vision for this town, I know most of you do, the vision of this town is moving forward, and creating these opportunities. And when it is all said and done, flexibility. The idea of staying where we are, not moving forward, not giving things a try, I think is an antithesis of what you folks stand for. I think it is an antithesis of what the city stands for. It hasn't taken us from where you took office, to where we stand right now as the number one city in the northeast. I would encourage all of you to continue to think about this project in a positive light as an opportunity for the 21st century. Thank you.

Andria Albright, 70 Randall Street, stated:

I am here to support the civic center on the Staples site. I think that it is going to bring traffic, walking traffic to the downtown area. I am going to be a small business owner. One of the things that the bank asked me in my five year business plan is where my location is going to be and why I think I can support a business there. I can support a business downtown Manchester, with economic growth, I think that the site at the staples site is the site to have the civic center and I would put my business downtown. If the civic center doesn't go there, I'm not going to put my business downtown because nobody is going to be there to see it. So I hope that you all think really hard about this and support this and vote yes to buy it.

William Craig, Manchester resident stated:

I do support the site. I didn't expect to speak, but I didn't expect to see the gentleman from Goffstown, Mr. MacKenzie, raising the same arguments that he raised against the civic center, and using the same ones against this local site. First of all there are no federal funds involved. Secondly the Manchester Housing Authority acts only as an agent of the city and finally all of those arguments that he used against the civic center, and against the center of New Hampshire went through the courts and the courts agreed with the city and Manchester Housing Authority saying that the benefits to the city far outweighed that the developer and I can assure you that the Philopoulos' did not walk away with multi-million dollars and I can assure you that in this situation the city is covering all of the bases if it votes to acquire this site for this purpose. Thank you.

There being no further business to come before the special meeting, on motion of Alderman Wihby, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk