

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

**January 10, 2000**

**7:00 PM**

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Pariseau.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

Mayor Baines requested that a moment of silent prayer be observed for Mrs. Loeb.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Gatsas, Levasseur, Sysyn, Clancy, Pinard, O'Neil, Lopez,  
Shea, Vaillancourt, Pariseau, Cashin, and Hirschmann

Absent: Aldermen Wihby and Thibault

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the public hearing is to hear those wishing to speak with regard to determining the necessity, public purposes and net public benefit of acquiring, by negotiation or eminent domain, land located in the City block bordered by Pine, Merrimack, Union and Laurel Streets within the City of Manchester for the purpose of constructing a new police station; 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 Baines stated at this time, I would like to apologize to the public and to the Board but through an error in scheduling there is also a meeting of the Board of School Committee this evening, which I am required to attend and chair and I will be turning the meeting over at this time to the Chairman of the Board of Aldermen, Alderman Cashin, to lead the public hearing. Also, just for the interest of the public and the Aldermen, no motions will be accepted this evening. All testimony will be taken under advisement and this matter shall be dealt with at a later date in accordance with Board procedures.

Chairman Cashin requested that a presentation be made by representatives of the Manchester Police Department.

Chief Driscoll stated thank you for allowing me to come before the Board tonight. Prior to starting, I would like to introduce the folks that are here with me from the Police Department and from the architectural team. All three of my deputies are here. Deputy Duffey, Deputy Robinson and Deputy Stewart. Also, Captain Glenn Leidemer is here, the project manager. On my right is Dale Dollard from Lavallee Brensinger and Melissa Bennett from Bartlett/Bennett Architects and Fred Urtz from Lavallee Brensinger. I would also like to thank the folks who have helped us come as far as we have. The Clerk's Office was very instrumental in sending out some of the paperwork. The City Solicitor's Office has been very supportive and Bob

MacKenzie of Planning has worked with us. This process started in 1993 when the Police Department identified space needs. Since then, we have worked step by step to this public hearing here tonight. The presentation will be brief. I intend to have four people speak, one of who is myself. I hope that everyone has this packet. If you don't, we would be happy to provide it to you. We will touch briefly on everything that is in the packet with the exception of the timeline. The timeline is self-explanatory and that is something that we will just go right over. I would like to start by going over the building history. Our building that we are in now at 351 Chestnut Street is 44,000 square feet. It was built in 1976, 24 years ago. I realize that probably most of you have heard this information before, but for the new Aldermen I would just recap it real quickly. In the summer of 1998, after coming before the Board of Mayor and Aldermen in the annual budget process since 1993 the CIP Committee, supported by the full Board gave the department a significant amount of money to go forward with an expansion project. The project started with 14,000 square feet with a renovation of 29,000 square feet. The price that that time was \$6.9 million. As we entered the early spring of 1999 and started to do the CIP process for this year's budget, it became apparent that that was not the best use of the City's funds. We looked real hard at trying to make that renovation expansion work and realized that we could only meet 75% of our programming needs and that, in fact, it was necessary to come before this Board or the CIP Committee with a different proposal. We did that and it was supported by the CIP Committee. It was also supported by the full Board. It was a unanimous decision at that time and in the CIP process in this year's budget we were given \$2.35 million to go forward with architectural engineering, design and planning as well as land acquisition. Since that time, I have met four times with the Board to keep them abreast of the project as requested. We have met recently seeking direction. We have completed title searches on the land. As you remember, I came before this Board on October 5 for a final vote on the identified piece of land. That being between Merrimack, Laurel, Pine and Union Street. Mr. Fred Urtz from Lavallee Brensinger is going to talk about the criteria in a short time. He is also going to talk about the other sites and why this site was selected. We have done title searches. We have not had the land appraised or the buildings and we have not done testing or surveying. That has been placed on hold pending this hearing. The program in planning and design has been completed and there are floor plans, as well as a rendering of the perspective building for your review tonight. That basically is the history of the project as you perhaps remember one of the things that made this project work was that we, in working with the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, had identified four smaller City departments that would be, if the Aldermen so desired, placed in our building now at 351 Chestnut Street. Our building now is a very nice building. It is simply too small. It doesn't meet our needs. I think that the best part of that plan is the fact that it would save a significant amount of rent. Somewhere in the area of \$260,000 over the next 10 years...each year over the next 10 years. The second thing that I want to talk about and the main reason that I am here tonight is to talk about the need to take that land. There are basically two areas that I would like to touch on real quick. The first is the space need. Many of you have visited the Manchester Police Department and understand that building and have walked through the building for which I thank you. You can visualize the conditions there. I have people, as you folks know, literally working in closets. There are areas in the building that because there are so many folks working in them they can't be cooled in the

summer. When that building was built in 1976, the Police Department had 179 employees and we now have 276 employees. The building is simply inadequate. Today, I got out a copy of the annual report from 1976 and I would like to pass it around and ask you to take a look at it as well as the annual report for the last two years. You will see that we are significantly a different operation in our responsibilities, the needs of our community, the challenges and responsibilities that we have on a daily basis. Our organizational chart is in your packet. It shows the Police Department in 1976. It also shows the Police Department at this time. Clearly, the technology and our responsibilities have changed to the extent that we are badly in need of space. The function, as well as the space is so different than it was and this is probably a bad analogy but I will make it anyway. If one were to think about something that they know and can remember back in 1976 and the example I will use is South Willow Street. If you compare South Willow Street to what it was in 1976 you will see that it is significantly different. If you were intimately aware, as we are, of what our responsibilities are at the Police Department and looked at our building as far as meeting the needs of the community in 1976 it certainly did. It certainly does not now. We are not trying to build the Taj Mahal. We are trying to build something that can be expanded, that is going to carry us into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and something that the City can be proud of and something that will preserve the public safety of this City. I guess I have probably spoken enough and would ask that Fred Urtz and Melissa Bennett talk about site criteria and site selection.

Mr. Fred Urtz stated each of the Aldermen has a packet and the material I am going to present is in the packet so would it be okay if I set up this boards so that the audience can see them.

Chairman Cashin replied yes.

Mr. Urtz stated I want to talk about the process that the City went through to end up selecting this site for the proposed development of the Police Station. Last summer, we set about a process of trying to find the best site in the central city district for the location of the new Police Station. We met with the Police Department. We met with the Manchester Planning Department and the design team to develop a list of criteria that would be used to evaluate the various sites that we would look at. We brought that list of criteria to the Aldermen to discuss that with them and to get any further input that they might have on the kinds of issues that would come to bear on trying to locate this civic facility. The issues that were ultimately decided upon to be part of the analysis of that site selection were first that it be a central location. The Manchester Police Department is a centralized facility. It does not have precinct facilities that are all over town so all of the administrative operations and all of the beginning and end of duty patrol functions are at that facility so it is important that it be centrally located in the City and that was really a prime driver of trying to find a site. Second obviously is access to it and traffic patterns since all of the patrol cars come and leave from that facility, the ability to get to it without circuitous routes or going through highly residential neighborhoods was important. Parking was important since parking is very limited at the current Police Station and that is one of the real problems with that facility. The Police Department was pretty adamant that there needed to be either on-site or very nearby sufficient parking for the vehicles for the patrolmen, but also parking for residents

and citizens who are coming to visit the Police Station on various business matters. Parking, as we really started to look at sites, took on a variety of characteristics. First, we wanted to find if possible on-site parking, 150+/- spaces on the site of the Police Station for safety and security needs. We also realized that as we looked at various sites across the City, many of which turned out to be City parking lots, that there were competing demands for those spaces so if we were to locate the Police Department on a current site that was highly utilized by the business people and citizens of this City then we would have to replace that parking so if we located the Police Department on a parking lot then we would have to acquire other property to build another parking lot. Also, off site support. When you are looking at locating a civic facility, you try and see what other civic or urban support facilities are around. Other parking garages, parking lots, off-hour businesses that are nearby and can help support some of those needs. We looked at all of those parking concerns at the various sites. The building locations, massing expansion, is the site big enough, is it the right dimension and that sort of thing, existing conditions like is there any problem in particular with the site environmentally or topographically or geotechnically and those kinds of things. Topography again is one of those existing condition issues. Adjacency to other City buildings was also looked at. Arguably, the Manchester Police Department is one of the top five or ten civic buildings in the City. You make an investment in that and it is important that its location is prominent and has some adjacency to other City buildings, both for the sense of developing an urban center and for the sense of convenience for people in other City departments who travel to the Police Station regularly. The neighborhood context. I know that we will discuss that at great lengths tonight, but what is the nature, what is the current character of the neighborhood that the Police Station is going in because it can, not in all cases, but it can effect changes in that neighborhood for the good or for the bad. Public presence. Again, as I said a moment ago, the Police Station is an important civic building and where it is located, its imagery within the City is important to how outsiders view our City and how people coming in to bring businesses and jobs into the City view our downtown area. Finally, development potential. When you build any kind of a civic building, be it a courthouse or a library or a school or a police station, its construction can generate other peripheral development in the block adjacent to it. For those types of businesses and activities that will have visitors and will be supported by the activity that the Police Station brings so all of those criteria were considered. We looked at six or seven sites throughout the central business area of Manchester and ultimately decided to bring to the Board as a recommendation the site located bounded by Merrimack Street, Pine Street, Union Street and Laurel Street. Currently, as you know it is diagonally across from the Fire Station and across the block from the Federal building, has a commercial building on the southwest corner, a parking lot on the northwest corner and a variety of single family and multi-family dwellings as you move to the east along Union Street. We looked at a number of different configurations as we talked about the early design proposal for this site. There were some within the block, some that crossed the street and we looked at pieces around the block and in discussing that with the Planning Department, the Police Station, and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on a couple of occasions, came to the final proposal which is what is being heard tonight in this public hearing to essentially take the majority of that block, the one parcel that is currently not taken or redeveloped as part of this proposal is the Manchester Housing Services building at the southeast corner of Laurel and Union Streets. I

will show you in a moment in a little more detail with the model, but the black square roughly identifies the location of the site that the building would sit on. The yellow block in the back is the support parking that is needed by the Police Station. In this instance, there are 145 spaces. If we put this in reference to how we are sitting here in the City, we would be this way with Pine Street, north is up this way, Merrimack Street, Union and Laurel. This is a massing model meaning it is just a big white block that kind of represents the height and width and breadth and shape of the Police Station. It is clearly a governmental scale building. It is probably 20' or so taller than the Fire Station, but 20', 30' or 40' shorter than the Federal building across the street so it is in scale with those governmental buildings in that block. The remainder of the site is essentially parking. It is secured parking, however, so there will be some form of a fence around that and we intend that to be an architectural quality fence so that it is attractive. It will also be landscaped because we are sensitive to the residential abutters, both on the north side of Merrimack Street and particularly the south side of Laurel Street. The parking lot will be lit, however, it will be a type of lighting called a cut-off luminaire that directs its lighting down onto the ground and hedges it at the edge of the street so the lighting is really focused on the parking lot and not spilling off onto adjacent properties. The rendering that we have over here is a preliminary schematic design rendering of what the building might appear like architecturally. The main entrance to the building, certainly the public entrance would be on the corner of Merrimack and Pine Streets diagonally facing the Fire Station and looking downtown towards the other government buildings. It would screen the parking to the back. As I said there would be a fence that surrounded the remainder of the property with the patrolmen's entrance being off of Merrimack Street and the building would be rendering masonry and granite, the typical Manchester, NH materials that you are all familiar with from the Mill buildings and other civic buildings in the City. I just want to close this part of the presentation by saying that it is always a very, very difficult decision to come into a neighborhood and to site a public building on the site of privately owned residential facilities and it is something that we do not do without a great deal of consideration and discussion and concern for that decision. However, in the long-term interest of the City it is also very important to choose the right site for a building that the citizens make a significant investment in like the Police Station. We do believe and know that the process we went through was the right process. We carefully considered all of the options and we are certainly here to answer any questions you might have on the site selection process.

Chief Driscoll asked to have Glenn Leidemer make a few comments.

Captain Glenn Leidemer stated good evening. The last time that I appeared before you, the question arose as to the total cost of the project and where it was shown as to be the total cost. If you turn to Page 4 in the packet that the Chief referenced, you will find not only the total cost but also a cost summary. Also at that last meeting a question was asked relative to whether the total cost did in fact include the cost of the renovation to the current station. The cost does, in fact, include that and the renovation costs are reflected in that total cost and they are for whichever City agencies this Board decides will be moved into the Police Station, but that is in fact in the total cost. As to issues and concerns, this Board may or may not know that on November 23 of last year the Police Department hosted a neighborhood meeting at the City

Library. Invited to that meeting were tenants of the area impacted by the site of the new Police Station, landlords, abutters and it was an opportunity for those people to interact with the Police Department, the architects, and a representative of the City Solicitor's Office was there as well to explain whatever processes were entailed. The concerns that were expressed...I actually have the original here and that original was transferred to a one-page document and that is also included in the packet that has been given to the Board. I am sure that there will be other concerns that will be raised tonight, but as it relates to the concerns that were raised that evening, residential parking, whether it be permit parking which we had Deputy Duffey address that that evening, vehicle access, the lighting surrounding the facility, relocation assistance, payment for moving costs, financial assistance which I believe Deputy Duffey will touch on a little bit later, but of these concerns that were expressed, I have talked to the architect and I have talked to the Chief and I don't believe that there is one that was brought to our attention on November 23 that is insurmountable. I think that, as I said, we have had a discussion with the architect and we have also had a discussion with the Chief and the input from him and the architect both are that these things will, in fact, be addressed and as I said there is nothing there that is insurmountable and nothing that we can't handle for the citizens.

Deputy Chief Duffey stated I am going to talk briefly about one of the subjects that interests a lot of people here and that is the neighborhood impact and the relocation issues that we are all going to have to face should this project go forward. Just a few comments that I would like to make and some of these were addressed at the November 23 meeting, but I want to emphasize tonight that we are after all your Police Department. We are not trying to invade the neighborhood, we are the neighborhood. We are part of the neighborhood and have been part of it for a little over 100 years now. We would like to think that we have made a lot of positive contributions to the neighborhood over the years. Not just to the Center City neighborhood, but all around the City but in particular the Center City has seen a marked increase in the conditions that people live in and the quality of life. We have directed patrols into that area, erected substations, and developed community police programs. In short, we have done everything we can do in the Police Department to make that a better place to live. We have not asked anyone to come and speak on our behalf tonight except for the people who are speaking, including myself. Well there is a reason for that and the reason is that until very recently we thought we had a consensus. We always worked with the folks in the neighborhood on every single issue and we have been working with them on this one. Opposition to this has frankly come only lately. We feel that we have taken all of the right steps. We had the hearing on November 23. Some of you were there. We heard very little opposition and promised to solve the problems. That promise still exists. This is a necessary piece of progress so that we may be a better Police Department for this City. This isn't a thoughtless land grab by some faceless business entity. We need this building to better serve the people in the community that we are sworn to protect. Progress sometimes does come with a cost and we understand that it is a human cost but we know about human hardships. We deal with them every single day. We don't like causing them though and we are very sensitive to what has to be done. At the meeting on November 23 I named a transition team. Three of my very best people who are going to assist people that are displaced. That team is still in place. What are we going to do specifically, there is no way to

tell yet. I can't tell you if we are going to hire U-Hauls. I can't tell you what type of financial assistance might be available. That, of course, is up to you but what I can tell you is this. We will do what it takes. If I have to send six police officers over to one of these folks houses to help them move, I will do it. Another gentleman came up that night at the meeting and said he was afraid he was going to have trouble sleeping. Well, we will buy him a sound machine. We will do what it takes. We are real good at doing what it takes and we don't often have a blueprint to follow. I guess if in the final analysis and the wisdom and the wishes of the people are that we take our building plans and try to find another location, then so be it. The one thing that we are grateful for at least is that the need is evident. Nobody is questioning the need. I think everybody knows that we need a new station and certainly if you have been through there you know that, but please in this hearing this evening I would ask everyone to not paint us as some heartless entity intent on stealing people's homes. That is not what we are here for. We are the best Police Department in the State of New Hampshire, in our humble opinion, and we want to be better. This facility would make us better. We are determined to serve this City and do it in the best way possible. We have always worked with everyone in the City and I can't imagine why anyone would think that would change now.

Chief Driscoll stated if there are any questions we would be pleased to answer them. If not, that concludes our presentation.

Chairman Cashin stated I would ask the Board to hold any questions until after the people have a chance to speak.

Chairman Cashin called for those wishing to speak.

Felix Torres, 44 Pennacook Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I am here speaking on behalf of the Manchester Housing Services. MHS has already sent all of the Aldermen the very specific issues that we have with this particular project so I won't talk about those specific details. I will talk about the spirit of our position. To quote someone who recently spoke in Manchester, what is the distinction between a place and a mere location. To me it is community and that same writer said that the attachment of people to the place they live, that is the definition of community. Make no mistake, the project destroys such a current existing community. A community where people live, play and eat. You will take away their homes. The project will leave a spiritual and physical scar on the fabric of the neighborhood. Where once there was a quiet, quaint neighborhood, there will be an office and surrounding parking lot. Where there once was a neighborhood that survived since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there will be asphalt. Where there once lived 38 families, there will be no place at all. You may decide that the benefits of having the Police Station at this site outweigh the drawbacks and I think that is why you guys do what you do and I do what I do because it is a tough decision you make every day. You need to juggle the priorities and you certainly may decide that in this particular place, but please don't make that decision with the illusion that our neighborhood benefits from this particular project. We believe that this decision need not be made. While the need for a new Police Station, as the deputy has laid out and nobody is arguing the need for a new Police

Station, but the need for this site is not as clear. The establishment of a government corridor or destroying a neighborhood to assure neighborhood presence are not enough reasons to displace an entire block. We just had a quick explanation of the search process. It seems to me that when you pre-select sites you get the best pre-selected site and not the best site overall. It is kind of like saying I want to pick the best, most gas efficient car and then saying the three cars I am going to look at are a Lincoln, Jaguar and a Cadillac. So you will get the best most gas efficient of those three, but it won't be the best most gas efficient car. Some have taken issue with the timing of our opposition. While we were unaware that the democracy came with time limits, nevertheless the Board of Directors at MHS discussed and acted as soon as the site became public information. Throughout the process, I informed the Chief that the opposition of my Board was a real possibility. That I report to them and they will ultimately make the decision on what stand the MHS would take. I hope you listen to our concerns and not be upset about the time when we raised them. Finally, I don't come here particularly happy to voice opposition to the Police Department. The reason is that we have had a long partnership with the Police Department. Everything that Deputy Duffey said about what this department did for our neighborhood is true and we don't argue with that, but we still think that this site is a mistake and having said that we do look forward, after all is said and done one way or another, to keep working with Chief Driscoll, the deputies and the entire department because we think they do a fine job. Thank you.

Eufemia Mercado, 92 Laurel Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I have someone who is going to translate for me. Ruth Guerrero stated I live at 180 Merrimack Street and I will be translating for Ms. Mercado. She said that one of the questions she has is why they have chosen that particular place or site and she does know that they explained that and she understands that. She feels that the Police Department idea is very good but have you guys thought about the poor families that can't go ahead and purchase another place just as easy as you say. She, in particular, has looked around and searched for other homes since this news and she hasn't been able to find something that is feasible for her. She has three children and they have been doing a great sacrifice to maintain and pay for their home. If your decision may be to go ahead with this project and this site, but at least she should get what her home is worth and not be cheated out of it.

Annette Monroe, 82 Laurel Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I am speaking for the same thing she is saying. I own my own home too.

William Lamotte, Sr., 100 Laurel Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I have lived at 100 Laurel Street for six years. I rent the property and it seems to me that you guys have gone way ahead before you contacted anybody here. You have this just about set the way you want to do it and I think we should have had a little more input on it, the people who live there. There must be another way without tearing down an old neighborhood like that. People have lived there for years and years and I think you could do better in another location. Thank you.

Reverend John Gallagher, 231 Merrimack Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I am the pastor at St. Anne's Parish. St. Anne's has existed at the corner of Union and Merrimack Streets for over 150 years and I noticed in our parish history today that they realized when they built it that they built it in the suburbs, but for those 150 years clergy and religious have offered social services from that place all during that time period and especially during the 1990's, participation in the efforts of the Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services. As a matter of fact, Mayor Wieczorek appointed the pastor of St. Anne's to the Aldermanic Steering Committee, which founded and established Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services at the time as a collaborative of government, business and neighborhood residents so we, too, have always had a good working relationship with the Police Department and other City agencies. In the past 10 years, I have watched the neighborhood turn around from a blighted, ignored stereotype section of the City to a neighborhood that is one the move where residents participate and, in fact, drive the organization such as Neighborhood Housing or the Community Resource Center or the Community Outreach Partnership Coalition, neighborhood organizations that have been working to better. All of those organizations are partnerships with the City agencies and business so as a citizen and as a community service provider I, too, share the concern that the Police Department have an adequate or an excellent facility but I do not believe that this is the right location. The impact of the project will be enormous. Laurel Street, between Pine and Union, probably one of the most beautiful blocks in the Center City, will never be the same. Merrimack Street between Pine and Union will join the growing ranks of governmental sprawl, which began a long time ago with another story at Elm Street and has been proceeding eastward. Most importantly, the most vulnerable homeowners and residents will be subjected to a process with few guarantees and little security during a crisis of affordable housing in the City. The City of Manchester has been a major partner in the restoration of the Center City. The transformation that has taken place has been based on renewal and restoration of existing properties, offering affordable home ownership for resident homeowners who have a stake and have taken an interest in this neighborhood and in the City. So wherever the Police Station should be built, I think more consideration needs to be given on the impact on displaced residents and businesses and that a broader based consultation might have avoided what appears to be an 11<sup>th</sup> hour objection. I urge the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to seek an alternate site for the Police Station and to re-commit themselves to the continued restoration of the Center City neighborhoods in your future deliberations. Thank you.

Maria Skapderdas, 1121 Union Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I am here as Chairman of the Heritage Commission of Manchester as an interested observer.

Liz Scadova, 435 Union Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I have lived there at different times and it is my home. My concern is basically for the residents whose homes surround the block that is being taken. Those residents, the ones that are going to have the long term effect. My home faces the block that is being taken as do the homes of many others. My concern is that there will be a great deal of added noise, noise from added traffic and sirens and no noise controller can block that out. I know from experience. The residents who live around the area will be subjected to an inability of sleep which not only affects health, but

this is a family neighborhood and you know what happens when families are awakened during the night; they can't sleep. You know what happens to the family relationship and that will be a long-term effect in the neighborhood. Property values will plummet. That is another concern and those of us who do live around the block, although we think it is a good thing to have the Police Station in a supportive area, are the ones that are going to feel that this is not the correct place. The architect mentioned about the neighborhood context. That will change because those of us who remain, whose homes are not destroyed by this new project, will eventually have to move. It will be impossible because of the concerns that I have listed, for us to stay there. So I do think that another position should be considered. Another location. Thank you.

Kathryn Steub, 374 Laurel Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I would like to address tonight the historic value of the neighborhood which you are considering taking. 150 years ago, when the first Board of Mayor and Aldermen took their seats in this chamber, the houses on Laurel Street were there. The ironic thing is that these houses were not built for posterity. They were built as cheap rental properties by speculators looking to cash in on the City's booming growth. During the decade between 1840 and 1850 when these houses were built, the City's population went from 3,235 people to over 13,000. The Amoskeag Mills employed 4,500 people and those people were eligible to live in corporation housing. Everyone else needed to find somewhere else to live. Among the first residents of Laurel Street were the first shop keepers on Elm Street, delivery men, the men who constructed the mills or built the streets and water lines, anyone with a family and the City's first Irish immigrants, including Father MacDonald who lived in a house on Laurel Street when he first came to the City in 1848 to found St. Anne's. They all lived in neighborhoods like the one on Laurel Street. That whole area was filled with these kinds of houses. It is essentially a time capsule from the first decade of our City's history and it is the only one left. This block is not isolated in its historic significance. It is part of a larger historic district, which includes St. Anne's Church which, at 150 years old this coming April is the oldest church in the City; the home of John Maynard who single handedly stopped the Know Nothing Riot of 1856; the Sisters of Mercy Complex, which includes the House of Martha, Mount St. Mary's Convent, the Magnificate Press Building, the Lady Grace Academy and a Diocesan Museum. It would be a shame to lose this valuable historic resource, especially at this time when so many historians are turning their attention away from the prominent citizens and toward the ordinary people. We could learn so much about ourselves from this neighborhood. Dr. James Hanlon of the Worcester Polytechnical Institute agrees. He wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on the people lived in these neighborhoods. He was unable to be here tonight, but he asked me to convey his thoughts and he sent me this letter.

"Thank you for letting me know of the City of Manchester's upcoming hearing on the possible condemnation of a block of housing on Laurel Street, which represents an intact neighborhood from the 1840's. I wish I could come to the hearing, but I will be attending the American Historical Association's meeting in Chicago where I will be representing the New England Historical Association as Executive Secretary. I hope that you will convey my strongest opposition to this destruction of these historically significant buildings. As I pointed out in my book, The Working Population of Manchester, NH, 1840-1866, from the 1840's through at least the 1880's, the Laurel Street neighborhood represented an important housing alternative for Manchester's working population. The foreign born, in particular, were able to maintain a level of independence, cultural identity and ethnic and religious unity by building their own vital communities and privately owned non-corporation housing in this neighborhood. As a surviving artifact,

these houses represent a valuable part of the City's heritage and ought not to be destroyed without the most compelling of reasons. As other cities have learned, much to their regret, historically significant buildings once lost can never be recovered. I would point in particular to the example of Lowell, Massachusetts. Just a few short years after the destruction of working class housing opposite the Lowell High School and Lucy Larkin Park, the value of these houses became abundantly clear. The Lowell National and Historical Parks demonstrated that historical tourism would play a vital role in the economic recovery of the city. As the city sought examples of worker's housing to restore and include in interpretive tours and exhibits, the loss of this housing, regarded as an eyesore only a few years prior, was universally regretted. I hope that Manchester does not repeat this mistake. I fully appreciate the need for space for modern public buildings, but it would be a mistake to destroy an historically intact neighborhood dating from the City's earliest years in order to build for the future. The Laurel Street neighborhood should be an important part of connecting Manchester's past to its future by demonstrating from whence the City came. I urge City officials to preserve the Laurel Street neighborhood for future generations."

I would like to add that I, too, have great respect for the Manchester Police Department and as a citizen I believe that they should have whatever they need to do their job well. I would also like to point out that the City's resources are finite and we have a new Administration and until they have an opportunity to set their priorities I ask that you postpone the demolition of these historic buildings. We shouldn't rush ahead with this. Ten years ago we were in a hurry to demolish the Vitacone Theatre and three rows of corporation housing, which was on the National Register of Historic Places and that lot was on the corner of Bridge and Elm Street and today all we have to show for it is a vacant lot. This is not a problem neighborhood. These are fine people. These are decent people and they are paying taxes. I urge you to keep that in mind before you go forward with the demolition of these buildings. Thank you.

Ruth Guerrero, 180 Merrimack Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I come before you as myself now. I have been here for about 10 years and I have seen a lot of changes. I come from Massachusetts and I wanted to live in a nice, quiet place with not so much activity. My family criticizes me all of the time. I have known Annette and her family for about seven years now. My children have grown with her children and when she bought her house on Laurel Street it was a great joy for my family and hers. This has been her dream and she came from Massachusetts also to come and be in a better place to live. I am not saying that Massachusetts is bad, but I am just trying to say that we wanted a quieter place. My children have grown here and I like where I am living. I recently moved here. I used to live on Central Street. It will be very, very sad to see that neighborhood go for all of the reasons that have been said here. I do appreciate the Police Station and what they have done. My children do respect the Police and that is what it is all about, but there should be another place where they can go. Thank you.

Mary Sliney, 20 Merrimack Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I am not a Manchester resident, but my business address is 20 Merrimack Street. I am here to speak for the concern of access and need for housing. There is a critical housing shortage in the city of Manchester for working class families and I would just ask the Board to take into consideration, as you consider the location, any net loss of that kind of houses. The Way Home serves about 500 needy Manchester residents. They are not new to Manchester, with many of them living here for decades, who need assistance to seek an apartment or a house that they can

afford. In the past three years, we have seen a dramatic change. Three years ago, 15% of the families we saw were doubled up with another family because it took awhile to find a place that they could move into. Two years ago, 30% of the people we saw were doubled up with another family because it took twice as long to find a place to move into. This past year, 1999, 40% of the 500 households we saw were doubled up with another family, which is representative of the extremely low vacancy rate and the very serious lack of housing throughout the entire City that is affordable to people, who like many speaking here, reside in this neighborhood. I just ask you to take that net loss of housing into consideration as you make your decision. Thank you.

Richard Gelinas, 102 Laurel Street, Manchester, NH stated:

My concern is I just bought a home two years ago on Laurel Street and I would like to really keep my home. It is the first home I have ever had in the 40 years of living here in this City and if the City can't promise me another home to move to, then I would love to keep the one I am living in now because it has taken me this long to get this one, I don't know how much longer it would take to get another one. I would like to keep my home if there is no home to go to. Thank you.

Sister Patricia Sullivan, Windham, NH stated:

I am President of the Sisters of Mercy. Our location is in Windham, NH. Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this important public hearing. We are not in a position to pass judgement on the wisdom or lack thereof regarding the building of a new central Police Station. We do not know the extent of the analysis or the determination of need. I am here to speak of our concern for the 38 families and 90 people who will be displaced if the city of Manchester acquires, by negotiation or eminent domain, the City block bounded by Pine, Merrimack, Union and Laurel Streets to construct a Police Station. I am here this evening to give life to the Spirit of Mercy that seeks to relieve misery to address its causes to support persons who struggle for full dignity. Throughout New Hampshire, we have a 140-year-old history of direct service and influence in housing and community development for low-income people. Over this time, we have built upon the reputations, traditions and combined resources of organizations sharing the vision of creating and strengthening healthy communities through the provision of quality, affordable service enriched housing for individuals and families who are economically poor. The Sisters of Mercy own the building at 434 Union Street, formerly the House of Saint Martha for Working Women, the original site of New Horizons and now the home of Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services. Since 1994, we have leased the property to Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services because its mission to revitalize Manchester's Center City neighborhood is coincident with the mission and values of the Sisters of Mercy. We are in support of its programs to provide a solid foundation on which residents can build their neighborhood and watch it develop. We affirm the staff in helping residents. The Sisters of Mercy and Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services strongly believe and advocate that decent and affordable housing is essential to building healthy communities, not only within the boundaries of the Manchester community, but the nation at large if we are to achieve social and economic well being for all citizens. Directly across the street from Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services is the Frances Ward House, the original Mother House of the Sisters of Mercy

that was converted into 26 apartments for elderly with very low incomes. A new Mercy housing initiative is in McCalley Commons, an apartment complex in process on our property in Windham, NH. By the fall of 2000, we hope to have a complex occupied by 24 elderly persons in need. Since 1983, the Sisters of Mercy have made loans to the NH Community Loan Fund as well. As Sisters of Mercy, we carry out our mission of mercy guided by prayerful consideration of the human needs of the times. We are acutely aware that a decent and affordable home is out of the reach of many people today. Members of our community work with low and very low-income families and individuals, disabled and elderly persons who are victimized by rental markets that have become increasingly competitive. Too frequently, we are in touch with people who are unable to find decent, safe and affordable housing. These people are among the 5.3 million households in the United States that pay more than half of their incomes for housing costs or live in severely substandard housing. The residents of these households are the economically disadvantaged whose dignity we aim to affirm. Justice of mercy guides us in responding to the issues of housing justice to alleviate poverty. Our hope is that if you go forward with the Police Station, you would seriously guarantee that the dignity of each displaced family and individual will be respected. To that end, by negotiating a payment based on the free market value of the property of each resident on the block under question, by allowing each resident a voice in decision-making and appropriate time to make the transition, by helping each resident find a new home that is safe and affordable and accessible to services, particularly transportation, by assisting all residents to purchase or lease properties that are affordable for the long-term, that is helping to secure them low, high quality rent and mortgages throughout the life of the real estate. An environment where residents young and old feel safe can thrive in a healthy atmosphere will enhance their potential for better jobs and economic self-sufficiency. I believe that all of us working in partnership; the corporations, the foundations, the religious communities, the government agencies, all of the organizations can lead, if we share the political will to establish a model powerful housing alliance that will create healthier homes and vibrant communities into the future for the common good. Thank you.

Richard Duckoff, 380 N. Bay Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I am Vice President of Manchester Neighborhood Housing and the comments I am going to address to the Board tonight are personal comments. I would like to see that this become a win-win situation. By that I mean a win for the Police Department and a win for the neighborhood. I don't think there is anybody that feels otherwise. Right now, however, it is a lose-lose situation. It is a loss for the neighborhood and it is a loss for the Police Department. There can be no Police Department that is borne in this kind of soil that could evolve into something that this City would want. I would like to see a planning process and a Police Department built, if it takes five years to have it done, that is done right. I think we would all rather have that than something that is done and have ground broken next year and have it done wrong. We want it done right. What I have seen is a lack of process. I have seen the fact that the first time that I heard about the fact that this was at stake was after the October vote. I learned, to my surprise, that Neighborhood Housing had been told that they were to keep silent about and not say anything about it. That was the first that I learned about it – after the vote. That is the first time that the Board heard about it – after the vote. So, in fact, there was no consensus that was

developed in an early stage. None of the neighborhood partners were invited to sit around the table and I have learned that no project flourishes unless you have the important players sitting around the table planning something. I would recommend that this go back to square one. That the Board take its time. The only way to do something right is to take your time and do it right. An analogy was drawn by the Chief and that analogy was for the growth on South Willow Street and we are all aware of that growth. It was meteoric, was it not? I would like to draw an analogy. An analogy between this Police Station project, the choice of this site, and the Webster School. In 1940, the City proposed to have the new Webster School moved from Webster Street to Trenton Street between Ray and North Adams Street at the site of the Bixby Florist, the greenhouses there that had become unused. That land was available. What happened was that the neighborhood, the people led and eventually the leaders did follow. What happened was this. The proposition was made that that was an unrealistic site then they suggested Livingston Park. Does that sound familiar? Livingston Park has been suggested for many things. Ultimately, and who could have predicted it then, the site was chosen on North Elm Street. I predict that the outcome, if we all had faith in the fact that if we started over again a good outcome can happen, that we will have something similar to that. I would hope and expect that discussions will involve citizens from all sectors of the community so that a site could be chosen that would make everybody happy. Thank you.

Jeff Hayes, 156 Merrimack Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I didn't realize I was signing up to speak. I understand the needs of the Police Department but I feel the building dwarfs the neighborhood and it would make it very easy in the future to take the surrounding neighborhoods. Thank you.

Jennifer Goodman, 496 Hanover Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I am the Director of the NH Preservation Alliance, which is the statewide historic preservation advocacy group. Certainly we recognize the need to provide improved Police facilities. You have heard that from everyone tonight. Certainly we want the Police to be able to provide, continue and expand their fine services to the community. I am just here to echo or reinforce what has been or will be said by some of my preservation colleagues, as well as community residents here tonight, that the existing historic fabric and community character, as represented by the block in question here tonight is certainly an important ingredient in the City's quality of life, livability and economic vitality and it certainly should be an important ingredient in your decision making process. Thank you.

Nancy Miller, 65 Laurel Street, Manchester, NH stated:

In 1971 my husband purchased a house and I brought up two children there. Now I have my grandson there and when I die I would like to leave my house to my son and to my grandson. I think it is unfair because in the 1980's, Manchester Housing Authority came in and did a lot of work. They made the street look nice, put trees up and fences. You hear birds in the summer. It is the coolest street in the neighborhood in the summer and I think it is a shame for it to be torn down to be an asphalt jungle. Although we need a Police Station, they cleared out the prostitutes and it is a nice, livable place now and I really hate to give it up to an asphalt jungle.

When the Civic Center goes up, nobody mentioned this, there is no place to park now but imagine if the Police Station comes in. There will be no place to park then.

David Miller, 65 Laurel Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I just want to address the parking concerns. I live at 65 Laurel Street and it is hard to park now. With the Federal building and the lawyer's office on the corner of Pine and Laurel, it is impossible to park there. With the new Police Station coming in, I think it will make matters worse. Thank you.

Linda Ray Wilson, Manchester, NH stated:

I am the Deputy State Historic Preservation Office of the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources. We are a State agency. We work statewide, but we are based in Concord. Our agency has had a long and productive working relationship with Manchester Neighborhood Housing Services and with other City agencies, cooperating to accomplish both affordable housing and historic preservation in the City of Manchester. I am here this evening to speak for the historical and architectural value of the Laurel Street neighborhood between Laurel and Pine Streets and to respectfully request that you act to preserve the neighborhood. I want you to know that it is very unusual for our agency to present testimony at a municipal hearing of this kind, but the importance of these historical resources and our responsibilities as enumerated in our State legislation, RSA 227(C):4 if anyone wants to look it up, have brought us here in response to requests from supporters both of affordable housing and also of historic preservation in the City. I am pleased to know that we are joined here in speaking for saving the neighborhood by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Manchester Historic Association, the Manchester Housing Finance Authority, the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, and noted scholars because we all recognize that the Laurel Street neighborhood has human, housing and historic preservation values that are unique. I am familiar with this block. Indeed, I have held it in special affection and regard for 25 years since I first felt that I discovered it. I find it very puzzling and disconcerting that Manchester, a City which prides itself on its well deserved #1 livability rating and which is making major investments to protect and preserve the cultural and historical assets of the City such as Amoskeag, the Riverwalk, the downtown commercial area, that you would consider allowing demolition within or adjacent to such an historic neighborhood which provides one of the most striking visual and perceptual links to the daily life of the people who have made this City what it is for 150 years. All across America, one of the most popular residential and civic planning concepts is based on the neo-traditional neighborhood organized at a pedestrian scale, you don't have to have a car, with closely placed houses on linear blocks with trees and sidewalks and landscaping. Artificial clones of Laurel Street are springing up throughout the nation; many of them very expensive, to meet the demands of people who aren't lucky enough to live here and are hungry for the personal as well as the architectural and historical relationships that exist naturally there on Laurel Street and Laurel Street has the added advantage of being the real thing. With its interesting variety of history and architecture and people, it provides a range of housing possibilities that maintains the demographic diversity that is the hallmark of healthy communities and neighborhoods. It has an important contemporary function. One of which is

the direct continuation of its history because as you have heard it serves as a gateway for people to realize their dreams of home ownership. Some people think the American dream is to get rich and make lots of money, but that is not the American dream. The American dream is to live in a comfortable dwelling in a pleasant and convenient neighborhood surrounded by interesting neighbors who also value and respect the neighborhood, its people, the buildings and the setting that define it. Laurel Street and its residents are some of the City's oldest citizens and newest homeowners and they are joined together as you see here tonight by a special allegiance to a special historic place that is both their home and the City's heritage. I hope that you will recognize the uniqueness of their neighborhood, your neighborhood also, and its significance in the history of the City. I hope that you will chose to let Laurel Street live and to become an important part of the City's future. Thank you.

Maria Vesquez, 78 Laurel Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I hear a lot of people talking about different things over here tonight. About historic preservation, about a quiet neighborhood. I have been living there for 21 years. It is a noisy neighborhood. People are screaming and fighting in their homes. People play their music too loud. In the back alley between Merrimack and Laurel Street, there is garbage all of the time. No matter how much you try to clean your house and your back yard and your yard and make it look nice, everything is disgusting around there. You have to see it. If the newspaper would go over there and take pictures of the back alley, you wouldn't believe how much garbage is in there. It is out of the bags and out of the boxes. Day by day by day, nobody picks up their garbage. It is hard to get in our back yard with a car because everybody is parking more cars than are supposed to be parked in the back yard and you can't open the gate and get a car inside our parking space. There are a lot of people talking about historic preservation. The houses are too close for one and if you are the owner of a house and a neighbor lives next to you and they set the house on fire, your house is going to go up in one minute because they touch each other. A lot of people talked tonight about the neighborhood, but nobody lives over there. A few people only live over there. Nobody lives on Laurel Street like we do and they don't have to put up with drunk people and a lot of other things that I don't want to say here because it is too disgusting to live in that neighborhood, it really is. To me, I want to listen to the owners, the real owners, not people who come from other places. Thank you very much.

AJ McCartel, 92 Laurel Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I came from New York where in a neighborhood you couldn't go outside or do anything, but when I came over here we bought a house and found a house that we could afford. I can at least go outside, play and go places that are fun. If they tear down that house, we probably won't be able to afford another house because the houses are too expensive. There are houses smaller than ours that were \$100,000 and over but our house we got on special. An old man gave us that house for a special. It was like a gift to us from God and I would hate to move from that block because that block to me, I love that block and I wouldn't like to move someplace else because I grew up in that block. I have been living there for five years and it doesn't matter to me how dirty it is. It is quiet to me. It is not that dirty to me. Other people can afford houses, but my family is too poor to afford another house. If we move out of there, we are going to have to go

to an apartment that is small and I am going to have to be living in one room. I have my own room now and I like it. If I move from there I am going to have to go to an apartment where I have to live in one room with my other two brothers and I am not going to like it.

Clerk Bernier stated I have two letters that I would like to summarize for the Board. One of them is from the NH Housing Finance Authority. I would like to read a sentence, "Concerned that the proposed location for this new facility may not be the best long-term interest of the City and its neighbors." The second letter is from the Northeast Office of the National Trust for Historical Preservation. They asked this Board to look for alternatives to the site.

Chairman Cashin advised that all wishing to speak having been heard, the testimony presented will be taken under advisement and considered by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen at a later date.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business can be presented, and on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Clancy, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk