

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

**October 3, 2000**

**7:00 PM**

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance; this function led by Alderman Clancy.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

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

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

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated we have a gentleman who requested to make a presentation to the Board and the Clerk made an error in the process and he was advised that he could address the Board in public participation and be allowed up to 10 minutes to speak after consultation with the Mayor.

William Smillie, Manchester, NH stated:

The purpose of my presentation tonight is you have a bunch of information that has been passed out before you. My idea was not to inundate the Board with paperwork. My idea was to educate a little bit on the process and the planning process and what is going on with the City of Manchester. If I can call to your attention the June 19 package, it is rather thick. I don't want to go through it. It is the second time that it has been received by the Board. I ask that in your free time, which I know you don't have much of, you take a look at it, review it and understand some of the concerns we have with the

proposed sign ordinances that are being proposed by the Planning Board. More importantly, what I did was I submitted a bunch of photos that I would like to go through real quick with the Board and try and give you some idea of where I am coming from and what is going on in other communities throughout the country. Not only in Manchester, NH but in other areas around. You should have some photos in front of you. This is the first one. It is called the East Lynn. It is a picture of a hotel. That is a project being done right now in downtown Portland, Maine to revitalize downtown. Some details on the third page show what the hotel used to look like before. The fourth picture is just another photo of the All Star Café in downtown Pittsburgh. The next photo is Springfield, MA. The next photo is downtown Springfield. It shows a rather large display as you enter the downtown area. Some neon. The next photo is the Peter Pan billboard, which sits on 290 as you enter Springfield. It was just put up about six months ago in that area to try and add some life and draw some people off the Interstate. The next picture is Tinseltown, USA. Again, it is down in the southern part of the country. The next photo would be the Roanoke Civic Center. The reason I threw that in there is obviously we are building a civic center around here and with the new ordinance that the Planning Department is proposing, this type of signage would not be allowed at the civic center in downtown Manchester. The next photo I have is the Orpheum Opera Theatre. This is in one of the most historic districts in the country. You can see the electronic message center on the façade there and all of the lights and the flashing. It is a pretty nice piece. It is in a historic area down in Nashville, TN. The next photo is Bridgeport, CT. Total revitalization plan down in Bridgeport, CT as the Polka Dot Playhouse. Again, electronic message centers on both sides of the theatre. Large blinking new façade with lights. The last photo is Hoyt Cinema. They have installed these globes throughout the country. My purpose wasn't to sell signs here this evening. I no longer sell signs. I probably wish I had Mr. Gatsas' account with the sign industry but I don't. My purpose is that the Planning Board has a presentation or proposal in front of this Board of Mayor and Aldermen with regards to signage. It is my understanding and my experience is eight years in the industry. I travel all over the East Coast. I have been in major cities throughout the East Coast including Peoria, Illinois, which I understand this Board visited and looked at. I have seen revitalization projects done all over this country. One of the ways that it is done is through signage, through innovative signage. The signage industry is a creative art and it needs to be taken advantage of. One drawing that the Board has there in front of them is Margaritas. Again, I am not affiliated with the sign company that is presenting that to the City. I worked for them for a number of years, but no longer. Under the new ordinance, that sign will not be allowed. Under the old ordinance it would be. That is going to supposedly go in across from the Plaza downtown and it is now being reviewed by the Planning Board and it is within the code. I guess the reason I want to submit that to the Board is so that the Board can get an understanding that with the construction of a \$70 million I believe civic center right at the corner of and at the

entrance to downtown Manchester, we need to add some life to not only the City but it is my understanding and my belief that now is not the time to hurt the retailers in the area. The South Willow Street retailers and the retailers who should be paying the brunt of taxes in this City. The new plan that is before you from the Planning Department does just that. It is not a business friendly code and I have asked the Planning Department many times and I ask you what part of that new planning code is business friendly? What part of that new sign code is good for business? I don't see any part of that that is good for business. The only thing that I have heard from the Planning Department is it puts everybody on an even playing field. I will tell you that I don't know if Joe Kelly has the advertising budget of a McDonalds to be quite honest with you so it doesn't put everybody on a playing field. Generally it has been my experience that the McDonalds and the Home Depots of the world get what they want through the planning process. Signage is the small businessman's advocate and lifeline. When we start to take a look at that and start to cut that and look at ways to put everybody in conformity to what our ideas and what we think everybody should look like, then I think we have a problem as a City. We are on the brink of greatness. I believe that. I haven't left the City yet. I love it here. I live here because of the convenience. I enjoy this City. I am excited about the civic center. I am excited about Margaritas. I am excited about a lot of the changes. I think that a lot of you members travel around the country and you have seen some of these downtowns. You have seen downtown Baltimore and Camden Yards. You have seen some places revitalized through signage. Let's not start to get narrow minded and that is not with any disrespect to anybody. There is a creative industry out there. Let's tap into it. Thank you.

Alderman Wihby stated I know this is unusual because we don't usually have input but I have a quick question. We had asked you to sit down with Planning and go over that with them. Have you done that and what were the results?

Mr. Smillie replied yes. There are still some areas of disagreement.

Alderman Thibault stated my question would be we have a plan that we feel that as we do the Riverwalk or the Civic Center and such that we will be doing the signage that needs to be done. I mean I believe that there always and I would like to ask Frank, I see him out back there, that I believe through Traffic Tom Lolicata has already been appraised of when we get this thing in motion these things are going to happen. Frank, am I wrong in saying that? Maybe I should ask Dan.

Alderman O'Neil stated I know that one of the things that has been discussed is the trestle going across 293 from roughly just south of Singer Park to west Manchester. There was talk about doing signage on that advertising the City of Manchester and events going on

in the City of Manchester so yes, that in fact is a true statement. It also, if I may follow-up, my understanding is that some of the buildings in the Millyard, for instance Silknet and Pandora, have those rooftop signs. Although they would be grandfathered, any replacement of those or any new signage would not be allowed, correct?

Alderman Thibault stated I am sorry if I am putting you on the spot, Dan, but it seems to me that in Committee we discussed this before when Tom Lolicata was there and we know that this is forthcoming. As we produce, he is going to put whatever signage we need to put there. Myself and I believe several Aldermen on this Board who went to Peoria, Illinois and saw the riverwalk and some of the other things that were done there and some of the other Aldermen went to some other places, I believe that was one of the biggest things that they got out of this is that the signage and in showing people where to go on this was going to really make this thing materialize and I would certainly follow that up 1,000%. I want you to know that.

Mayor Baines replied just to remind you, we can rejected that proposal and keep the same rules and regulations that are in effect now.

Alderman Hirschmann stated if Planning's proposal is actually in conflict with our own development efforts, we at this time are developing our civic center and just as Roanoke, we have designed into the project an electronic message center for the corner of Lake Avenue and Elm Street. How can we, the City, be an owner of one of these and tell everybody else in town they can't have it? There is a conflict, your Honor.

Mayor Baines replied we can deal with that during the process. We appreciate the presentation. Just one more comment and we are going to proceed.

Alderman Lopez stated I think whatever difference there is, this is one Alderman who believes that we should go into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and we should have the signs and whatever recommendations there are I think this Board should know what recommendations you disagree with. I would be happy to have you provide us with your recommendation to the Planning Board so that we are all on an even playing field.

Jerome Duval, Manchester, NH stated:

My wife, Joyce, and I own and operate Derryfield Family Market and Deli at 393 Bridge Street. By now you are aware that Bridge Street east of Ashland Street is under reconstruction. I appear before you tonight to implore and to beg for your assistance to see that this project is treated as top priority and want it marked urgent if it is not already. Bridge Street, as you know, is well traveled. Some 15,000 cars per day, dozens of school buses in the morning and afternoon that cater to the areas four schools and motorists in

general congest this popular City street. This reconstruction might resemble Boston's big dig. The disruption to this area of Manchester is massive and should be treated most seriously. In addition to issues of public safety and the safety of school-aged children is the issue of this project's devastating impact on small business, specifically there are four shops feeling the effects of the streets prolonged off and on closings – our store, Malachites Hair Salon, Academy Fruit and Henry Sunoco continue to suffer from significant drops in revenue. It is at the point that with such inconveniences for motorists they don't care to risk detours and such adverse conditions to patronize our establishments. Small businesses survive on cash flow. Every day without customers spells trouble for each of our businesses. Allow me to be critical of Manchester's notification procedures to small businesses for a street reconstruction project of this magnitude. Receiving a notice lacking any details merely two weeks prior to construction start-up is as good as receiving none at all. Small businesses need time to plan for such a project that is viewed by us as catastrophic. Why not notify small businesses at the time the project is approved for funding by this body? Absent of better procedures, I believe that Frank Thomas has done his best in recent weeks communicating the details of reconstruction plans. When I have called Mr. Thomas, he has been quick to respond. He has been cooperative and empathetic to the plight of these four businesses. I do believe, however, he too is limited as to what he can do to expedite the project's completion. I speak on behalf of Bridge Street's small business owners. Please give to Frank Thomas what he needs to move this project forward. We would rather swallow the hard pill now than slowly bleed by a prolonged construction period. We ask that the City pull all the stops to finish this project as soon as humanly possible. The public consensus always seems to be that Manchester government can't get out of its own way when managing a project like this. I have been repeatedly told that if the City has told you one thing, you better believe another. That is by customers and by City workers alike. I have heard that there is no way that this project will be completed this year and that we can expect to see orange trucks back on Bridge Street next spring. As a business owner, I want to discredit critics of the Manchester Municipal Service departments by being able to broadcast the incredible job our City's workers did to complete this project ahead of schedule and with quality workmanship. Please involve yourselves in this project to insure that we all can brag of this. We call upon City government to help where it can and where it should. It is an efficient use of our tax dollars to complete this project quickly. City government can help these small businesses avoid disaster that will surely come if this project is to go on much longer. Ladies and gentlemen, the situation is that serious. The message I am giving you is not exaggerated to grab your attention. Without customers, our bills keep coming in, including our tax bills on our business properties. I want to ask, again, for your help. If there is any involvement you can give in the matter to work with Frank and expedite the construction we would surely appreciate it.

Mayor Baines stated by the way, Jerome, I would be remiss if I didn't say something having been over to your store on a Saturday morning the number of neighbors who commented what a beautiful addition that has been to the neighborhood out there as well. A lot of people comment on that change.

Shirley Brulotte, 227 Whipple Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I own a business on Maple Street. I am here tonight as a small business owner who was severely affected by the construction on Maple Street in 1999. It is imperative that new guidelines be put in place giving businesses an opportunity to have some input in the planning of construction projects directly involving their day-to-day business. Meeting and working with people and understanding their needs and working together could mean a much more positive result for everyone involved. The construction on Maple Street continually affected my business from April through October of last year. The sidewalks were torn up for over four months for several blocks. My customers had to walk in the street to get to my shop and for that matter to get to any place on Maple Street. I witnessed elderly people, children and even a person in a wheelchair trying to navigate on the edge of the street for months. Could this perhaps have been avoided by tearing up the sidewalk a block or two at a time? Big, heavy equipment was parked for days either right on the sidewalk in front of my shop or on the street directly in front of the store. Could it have been possible for them to park this equipment perhaps around the corner where it would have had much less impact on my business? One morning, no parking signs were placed in front of my business because as I was told they were going to do some work there the following day. The foreman had no regard for the effects these signs would have on my business for that particular day. Another morning three City laborers were sitting on the front door step of my shop at 10 AM hindering passage into the store. One gentleman, in fact, was sitting there eating ice cream. One poor lady who suffered the loss of someone in her family walked two blocks to get to my store so that she could arrange for funeral flowers when, in fact, the entire street was blocked off unnecessarily. They were not working on the street in front of my shop; they were working a block north. Unfortunately, no one took the initiative to move the horses to the next block. My sincere thanks to Alderman Mary Sysyn for her much needed help in resolving many issues for me during this difficult time. Frank Thomas of the Highway Department and Bob Morin of Energy North were very responsive to my needs, but unfortunately several hours had usually passed before issues were resolved. Many customers were discouraged from stopping by and my losses mounted. Construction foremen must be made aware of the impact that their decisions have on our businesses. Management right down to laborers should be held accountable for making sure that our needs are taken seriously when a construction project of this magnitude is directly affecting our businesses. New guidelines must be put in place immediately. We have

employees depending on us for their paychecks and quite frankly we do not have the capital behind us to withstand such significant losses. Thank you.

Bill Larkins, 245 Carnegie Street, Manchester, NH stated:

Thank you very much for allowing me to address the Board. I would like to cover the topic of the zoning and planning regulation changes that are undergoing in the City. This topic is inaccessible to the public because of the technical content of the regulations and the sheer volume of them and the lack of a clearly, I think lack of a clearly articulated vision for the City's built space. There is no current method or process of communicating either of these in what I would consider a user-friendly way. I think we can and should do better in the process of changing the zoning and planning regulations. This is a very important issue that I think is underestimated by the public in terms of its impact on everybody's daily life. It is as important as the schools and it is as important as the tax structure. I feel that we in the City need to slow down and open up the process of revising the regulations in the zoning. This process should achieve the following goals under the consideration that since the Master Plan was written and I have recently read, in 1993 the economy has changed. Everybody's attitudes are beginning to change about the City and how we live in it. So should the Master Plan. The goal should be to engage in the public immediately in the process at the front end through forums and hearings that try and articulate in a two-way format between Aldermen, planners, and citizens what our built environment will look like 5, 10 and 20 years from now. Not just the South Willow question, but every area of this City. We should develop from this forum division for the built environment of the City. We should develop a method and time trajectory for reaching that vision. I think that we need to rewrite our regulations, not just in words but visually to continue to articulate what that vision is in a way that is accessible to the citizens and the developers alike. We should rewrite our regulations not just to indicate what is forbidden, but also to encourage what is good about the built environment and what we would like to see the developers make for us. My personal opinion is that a Master Plan and the associated regulations should be developed to inspire small, pedestrian friendly traditional neighborhood centers spaced throughout the City. These centers would give a sense of community to the nearby residents, would reduce cross town traffic and define a built environment that is worth visiting while accomplishing one's daily errands. I think our current zoning practices run counter to this philosophy. I have recently taken up a passion and interest in planning and have been reading voraciously all that I can on the topic. In addition, my daily travels through the town are now suffering detours as I try to more widely study the possibilities here in Manchester and I do mean possibilities. This is a great City with far greater potential than we are allowing it to have with the way we are building it. I believe opening up the process is the first step. Opening up this process of rewriting the zoning regulations and the zoning plan. I don't think we can wait any longer for this. There should be no expediency due

to election years, South Willow variances, or any other reasons that we need to rewrite these because we think we need to increase tax bases. We can't wait any longer. We have to take the opportunity now while the economy is good. I call upon the Board to open up this process of changing the zoning and planning with the goal of formulating a visually articulated plan for the City that mixes uses, increases the sense of community and creates a built environment that is valued by all.

Mayor Baines stated there is a public hearing coming up on that and we will make sure that you stay advised. I know that you have been in my office talking to David and we will keep you and the public informed about the process.

Murray Onigman, 324 Walnut Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I have lived in the City for 42 years. I have paid taxes to the City of over \$125,000 and that has varied at times. I am here to talk about corporate welfare. Right up the street is where the corporate welfare is going. I want the Board of Aldermen to understand what they have done. The highest property tax building you all know is the Mall of New Hampshire, but you took away from our children and grandchildren the possibility of a new Central High School and a new West High School by signing a bond for the next 30 years for over \$3.5 million to \$4 million a year our share of the Rooms & Meals tax. You have also projected into that picture the 20% private investment by three public banks and those public banks are in business. Those aren't private investment. Being in a business, this 6% minimum this past year on \$12 million has got to be around \$700,000 and over the next 30 years will become \$21 million and all they gave us was \$12 million and you call that parameter of agreement 20% private investment? Three out-of-state banks? You know this isn't Merchants. This isn't Amoskeag. This isn't Manchester Savings. These are three out-of-state banks that do not know us. We have lived here all our lives and we have done that there and we have added that to the pool that you have done with the bond and you are actually whether you are Federal government, State government or City government, corporate welfare took the place of private investment and put up and gambled our property tax money, which could lead us in a short period of time to bankruptcy. It is not like the Patriots going to Hartford with a major league team. We are playing with third rate hockey here. You have decided to do that on a vote of 8-6 when one of you could have made it 7-7.

Mayor Baines recessed the public participation meeting to call the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to order.

Dan Eckman, 1280 Union Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I am a student at Central High School and we are here from the Manchester School of Technology to talk about some concerns that we would like to voice right now.

Stephanie Sekas, Manchester, NH stated:

I am a Memorial High School senior. I attend the Video Production Program. I am here to discuss what a wonderful idea it would be to get live connections for all of our high schools where we would be able to broadcast school events, particularly sports and things like that. I am sure that due to the incredible participation in sports, including all of its spectators, a lot of you would appreciate this idea.

Dave Chalmers, 182 Titus Avenue, Manchester, NH stated:

I am a senior at Memorial High School. I am here to talk about the importance of MCTV and how it affected my life. MCTV gave me the opportunity to have a head start in film and video and a career and more than other people do coming into college. I have met people from Warner Brothers, Paramount Pictures and MGM Studios. I don't know if you know about the movie going on at Hampton Beach called, "The Clique". Well, MCTV gave me the opportunity to have a speaking role in this movie. I was just thinking that since this was a meeting to make Manchester a better place and since Manchester is the #1 City in America and we should be very proud about this, that our cable access should also be the number one important thing in America, which our channel is not the number one best. We have a thing in Manchester, which has a lot of potential to be successful and you guys are not showing the support that we need. Thank you.

David Warsaw, Candia, NH stated:

I go to Central and I am also a student at MST. I live in Candia. I am a tuition student. I am here to talk about the digital equipment that we need. While working at MST, I have been able to get a job at MediaOne. I used to work there before AT&T took over. They have digital equipment there. We need the same equipment so that we can keep up with the future of the TV channels and all of that and it is just very important that we have this digital equipment. We need digital editing systems, digital cameras. Right now, we still have linear editing systems that will only be around for a few more years. We need some more digital cameras. We have SVHS cameras right now and those will become obsolete soon also. Thank you.

Michael Boisvert, 169 Bell Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I am also a student at Central and a Video Production student. As Dave was saying, we do need updated equipment. It is 10 years old and it gets hard to compete with other channels. I am a first year student and I noticed that when I watch the station that it wasn't the best and I didn't know why until I started taking a class and I realized that it is not brand-new equipment. Once it is five years old, it is out of date so it is really important to all of the students and everyone who wants to learn this to be able to learn on the best. Thank you very much. Finally, we would like to clarify that this was

unsolicited by Dr. Sullivan just in case there is any question. Finally, Dr. Sullivan, Mark and Jason cannot run a successful television station without the funding that they have requested. Not only is MCTV important to the three of them, but after hearing us speak our minds we hope that you will award them the funding they request. Thank you for your time.

Billy Dodd, Manchester, NH stated:

Real quick I want to touch on a couple of things. I have spoken about them before. The senior center. You see nice articles in the paper about the civic center going up and what it is going to do and all that kind of stuff and you see a little blurb in the paper about the discussions on the senior center going back to Committee. I reiterate again that Real Pinard has an excellent choice of the vacant lot right across from the Eastside Plaza on Hanover Street. There is a little stream that runs through there that could be cleaned up. You could have a senior center there. It would put a boost to the economy of the Eastside Plaza. It is an excellent choice. There is a bus route and everything. My grandson and I have had a little discussion about that and he said, Granddad when I am old enough to drive and he comes to pick me up he is just going to drive in circles because it is still in committee. Get it out of committee and start digging a hole or the seniors are probably going to vote some of you guys out. Make a move on the senior center. Three important things to me. This little guy right there, my son and my wallet. When you mix those three things together it comes up with a little bit of common sense that is good for the whole City. I have said it before. You want to build a brand-new \$14 million police station. You want to take out a whole City block in taxes. Use some common sense. Go over on the West Side across from Bass Island Park you have a vacant lot there. All they are doing is cutting up wood. You will lose the land tax, but there is no building to tear down and no families to displace. Put a West Side precinct up. Spend half of that \$14 million. Give the citizens a second building. That will make Manchester a safer place. Chief Driscoll can decide what divisions he wants to move over there, but as soon as he moves them into a second building, the overcrowding will be alleviated at the current police station and that is the only problem with that building, it is over crowded. It is structurally sound. The other \$7 million out of that \$14 million, I think you put a price tag on your senior center of \$3 million to build it. Take the other \$4 million or so and do something really constructive with it like buy some textbooks or go out on South Mammoth Road and buy a piece of land where they want to try and cram 95 houses on 26 acres and put a park, a City park. You complete three projects with that \$14 million, not just one. Use your money wisely. It was nice to see your, Mr. Baines, over at the dedication for the Rivard Tennis Courts. It would have been nice if some other people would have been there also. I don't agree with using school property to put up public recreation because that would have been a very nice place to put a two-story addition to alleviate some overcrowding at Memorial High. To leave you on a closing comment,

there is an old Chinese proverb, “He who comes in third in a primary election and allows his political opponent to put a sign on his yard is not a sore loser.” Thank you.

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

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

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk