

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

June 2, 2009

5:30 PM

Mayor Guinta called the meeting to order.

Mayor Guinta called for the Pledge of Allegiance. This was led by Alderman O’Neil.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen M. Roy, Gatsas, J. Roy, Osborne, Pinard, O’Neil, Lopez, Shea,
Garrity, Smith

Absent: Aldermen Sullivan, DeVries, Ouellette

Messrs: L. LaFreniere, P. Goucher, S. Duprey, J. Dirkwood

Mayor Guinta advised that the purpose of the public hearing is to hear those wishing to speak in favor of or in opposition to a proposed Zoning Ordinance. The Clerk will present the proposed Zoning Ordinance change for discussion at which time those wishing to speak in favor will be heard, followed by those wishing to speak in opposition. Anyone wishing to speak must first step to the nearest microphone when recognized and state his/her name and address in a clear, loud voice for the record. Each person will be given only one opportunity to speak and any questions must be directed to the Chair.

5. The Clerk presented the proposed Zoning Ordinance change:

“Amending the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Manchester by extending the R-3 (Urban Multifamily) zoning district to include property currently zoned R-1B (Residential One Family) located on a portion of Tax Map 691, Lot 143-A that will be north of the ROW centerline of a proposed Gold Street Bypass, adjacent to Bradley Street and adjacent to the Tax Map 691, Lot 143 (St. Augustine Cemetery).

“Amending the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Manchester by extending the B-2 (General Business) zoning district to include property currently zoned IND (Industrial) located on the south side of Gold Street east of former Lawrence Branch of the B&M Railroad and including two parcels of land known as TM 875, Lot 14 and TM 875, Lot 15.”

A presentation was made by Leon LaFreniere, Director of Planning and Community Development.

Mr. Leon LaFreniere, Director of Planning and Community Development, stated as has been noted, there are two rezoning requests presented before you this evening. I would ask the Board’s indulgence to consider them simultaneously as they are so intricately related. I would also ask the Board’s indulgence that we offer the presentation first on the Gold Street portion of the request. With me this evening is Pamela Goucher, the Deputy Director of the Department for Planning and Zoning. Pamela prepared the text report for you this evening and I’ll ask her to speak to that.

Ms. Pamela Goucher, Director of the Department for Planning and Zoning, stated may I ask to address the Gold Street petition and then the Diocese if that’s okay with the Board? I know you have them listed as two separate ones, but I would like to start with the Gold Street petition that involves two pieces of property on Gold Street, 725 and 835 Gold Street. Most people currently know that property as the vacated Associated Grocer’s site and adjacent to that, the property that the Joseph Brother’s has their equipment repair in. The former Associated Grocer’s site is approximately 16 acres in size, whereas the adjacent property is just under three and a half acres. Right now, both of the parcels are

zoned industrial and the petitioner is requesting the Board to change the zoning to B-2 or a General Business Zoning designation. If you look on the map that was handed out to the Board for each of the petitions, you will see that the property to the east of the subject parcels is zoned General Business as well as a portion of the parcels on the north side of Gold Street, east side of John Devine Drive. Some of you may know that as the Volkswagen site. I would like to point out to the Board that the petition that the BMA received did not include the small one-acre parcel known as Tax Map 875 Lot 16. It's a very small triangular shape property adjacent to the I-293, immediately south of one of these parcels. I point that out because back three or four years ago when the petitioner for another development company asked the Board for consideration of a rezoning, that small triangular piece was included, so I make that note in case the Board is inclined to take an action on the rezoning petition of this property. It would certainly be the staff's suggestion that the triangular piece be included because without it, it would leave a very small remnant, a 1.1 acre parcel, as industrial. That's just for the Board to recognize as they move forward in their deliberations on this particular request. Probably as you all know, the Master Plan sets the stage for how the City looks at zoning and land use patterns in the City. Back in 1993 the Master Plan looked at this area as industrial, but it also recognized that from time to time it would be appropriate to consider commercial use of these industrial areas. Essentially, if that's to occur, this Board in its review of that kind of change in activity really must consider how the traffic might be impacted to the adjoining land. In this case there is a fair amount of residential area up the hill on Gold Street as well as commercial activity towards South Willow Street. Currently, we're wrapping up the Master Plan. The new and updated Master Plan is looking at the future land uses. There is a fair amount of concern about whether or not the Business Commercial District will move away from the Industrial Zoning. This is something that we are looking at while we update the Master Plan. In a nutshell that's the petition from the Associated Grocers and T-Bow property. I would like to move on to the other property that involves the Roman Catholic Bishop of Manchester and the property on Bradley Street.

Alderman Lopez asked Your Honor, may I ask a question? It's so important that we see the whole area. Are there any maps or slides that we can see?

Ms. Goucher replied actually, the petitioners have some large maps. I think it is their desire to give you a more detailed presentation. There is a map that goes from the Associated Grocers site all the way up to South Beech Street. The other piece of this puzzle is the land that is the back portion of Saint Augustine's Cemetery. A few years ago, again with the petition that this applicant is asking the Board to consider, there's been a fair amount of discussion about the impact of traffic on Gold Street. Both in 2005 and in 2009 the applicant, even though they are different applicants, is looking to consider building a partial Gold Street bypass in order to introduce some traffic calming measures in the Gold Street neighborhoods. They are also looking to close off certain streets, which again, I think the applicant would like to give a more detailed presentation to this Board. As a result of that, the question is where you would get this bypass if you were to consider it. The Diocese has offered a portion of their land in order to build this new right-of-way and in exchange they're requesting that approximately eight or nine acres of their eleven and a half acres of property on Bradley Street be rezoned from a Single Family Residential Zoning District that it is today to an Urban, Multifamily, or an R3, designation. Right now the land that is directly to the north of this parcel is zoned Urban Multifamily and the land to the south along Gold Street is zoned Single Family, or R1B. The request that they are asking the Board for tonight would actually extend the Multifamily District, the R3, further south to the center line of the proposed Gold Street bypass that they are proposing to be built for traffic mitigation. The remaining portion of the Catholic Diocese property on the south side of the bypass would remain in the single family residential zoning designation and it would be the intent of the applicant to actually develop that with single family homes. That property would abut the existing single family homes on Gold Street. I think that's it for the technical overview. I don't know if the Board has any questions on the petitions for me, but I do know that the attorneys for the applicant wish to elaborate further to the Board.

Ms. Susan Duprey, Attorney from Devine Millimet, stated with me tonight is Dan Callaghan and we're both lawyers for the Law Firm Devine Millimet. We're here representing Walmart with respect to this rezoning. We have a plan that we wanted available for you to look at. The rezoning we are proposing tonight would clean up and redevelop a parcel of land that has been on the market for about nine years without significant interest other than the Home Depot project, which fell apart as the real estate market started to decline. It will demolish the existing building and create a completely new facility and a gateway to the City of Manchester. Walmart has been working on this plan with due diligence with respect to it for several months working with Alderman Garrity and a number of the City departments: Police, Fire, Planning; and an initial review to see if we're going in the right direction with respect to a plan. Obviously, this plan will need to go before the Planning Board and have a complete vetting by the Planning Board and all of the staffs of the Departments I just mentioned as well. We wanted to touch base initially with them to get an initial read, but there will be lots of further opportunity for public comment and public input. Also the Planning Board will undoubtedly hire a professional traffic engineering firm to review everything that we are putting before you this evening. We've also held two neighborhood meetings. As you've heard, the property is just a little under 20 acres. Currently, the Walmart store has 112,000 square feet. The new store would be 190,000 square feet which is about a 60% increase in size. This will allow Walmart to expand and accommodate a full grocery department. The current site cannot handle this expansion or we obviously wouldn't be here. It would be a lot cheaper and a lot easier to expand on our current site. Nevertheless, Walmart will remain fully responsible for property taxes on that site until such a time as it is sold and they have a very aggressive Retenancing and Resale Department to assure that the store is sold when and if this new store is approved. Right now, Walmart pays ten of thousands of dollars in property taxes. In fact, in 2008 alone, it paid \$175,000 in property taxes and clearly that number will do nothing but go up with a 60% increase in the store size. Importantly, this project will also create at least 100 new jobs with benefits including 401Ks, stock purchases, health insurance, and in addition

many new construction jobs that are separate from those jobs. Since word has gotten around about this proposal, Walmart has been besieged with job applications. We all know how much the job market is hurting in Manchester right now. As a total, Walmart will invest over \$50 million as a result of this project and the off-site improvements, during a period when Manchester is experiencing less development and redevelopment than it has in the past. Just as an addition, it would also have to obtain a Building Permit, which I'm sure will be an addition to the City's budget as well. I want to talk a bit about Gold Street. As you know this project will still go to the Planning Board for review, but we at Walmart have been working diligently to try to settle the issues that exist on Gold Street. I want to remind everybody here, I know you know that Walmart did not create the issues that are experienced on Gold Street today. They are long standing issues. I'm told they have been around for as many as 20 years, and yet we are asking a single entity to make a huge investment in improving Gold Street and it is showing willingness to do that. It's going to cost Walmart millions of dollars to make the improvements I'm going to discuss in just a moment. To help with the traffic study and to help determine what these improvements should be Walmart hired Vanesse and Associates, which is a premier traffic consulting firm in the Northeast. One of its vice-presidents has completed a study of Gold Street and developed these potential road improvements. As an overview I want to just state the study indicates that Gold Street, with these improvements, will flow much better than it does now, even after the Walmart traffic is added. It will be safe for residents since the improvements will slow down traffic, improve sidewalks and give enhanced access for emergency vehicles. Here is the list of improvements that have been discussed so far and Walmart has committed to: First is the addition of a high-tech signaling system at South Beech and Gold Streets with pedestrian phasing accommodations. It will also allow for emergency vehicle priority. There will be a vehicle detection system to vary the signal timing to account for snow and ice and to stagger traffic flow along Gold Street for residents to exit their driveways and access Sewall Street, which has been a concern. There will also be improved signs, pavement markings and sidewalks. This will be an entirely pedestrian friendly intersection. The

second group of improvements is what are known as traffic calming measures to slow the speed of traffic on Gold Street and these will exist between the newly proposed bypass and South Beech Street. These measures will include weaving the road from side to side, striping, adding landscaping and creating parking on Gold Street, granite curbing and a full pave of this segment of Gold Street. It will look little like it does today. There will also be sidewalk reconstruction and drainage system improvements. Then this moves by a left hand turn if you are coming from South Beech Street; there will be a stop sign where the bypass will begin. I want to say right now about the bypass: I don't know if you saw the article in the paper this morning, but it said that the bypass would go over cemetery land. That is false. I don't know where the reporter got that incorrect information. No part of this bypass or anything that we propose will be on cemetery land. I hope everybody knows cemetery land has been subdivided off from the rest of the Diocese's property that is developable and this bypass will only be on the developable portion. Where the bypass begins, from there down to Bradley Street, there will be construction of a new road with a sidewalk and it will be newly paved. There will be construction of a new drainage system and there will be granite curbing. There will be a fully signalized intersection at John E. Devine Drive, where one is lacking today. There will also be a pedestrian and biker friendly intersection where the bike path crosses Gold Street, which will include a speed table and island so bikers and pedestrians can pause in the middle of the street and safely make it across. Walmart will also pave the bike path from Gold Street to the southerly side of the Walmart parcel. There will also be repaving of Gold Street to the easterly boundary of the Walmart property. Drainage system improvements will occur there, granite curbing will occur there and there will be construction of a sidewalk. Gold Street will be closed at Bradley Street with a fitting of an Opticom controlled gate that will allow passage for all emergency vehicles and DPW. Street closures have also been suggested for President, Sewall, and Mack Streets; any such closures would also include Opticom controlled gates like the one on Gold Street. Lastly, there will be a conversion of that portion of Gold Street between Calef and South Beech Street to a one way eastbound and some minor traffic calming on that side as well.

These improvements will greatly improve and upgrade Gold Street, provide better emergency access by far and will enhance accessibility and safety for residents, pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists. Again, they are all being offered by a single property owner. Concerns about trucking have been expressed. You may hear those this evening. With this proposal, the trucking terminal that currently exists on the property will be eliminated. These roads are already no trucking roads in the neighborhood, but Walmart has the market power to truly enforce no-trucking on those roads. It will require all of its trucks to come to the John E. Devine intersection. In addition, as you will likely hear, a number of residents have sited that they cannot get out of their driveways. They are convinced by their experience that the new traffic will mean a worsening situation, despite these improvements. However, a traffic study has been done of this area and it shows, with appropriate timing of the South Beech Street signal, and the introduction of traffic calming measures, that they will be able to get out of their driveways and their experience on Gold Street will improve over what it is today. In fact, on weekday peak hours, the wait to turn onto Beech Street will be cut in half, from an average of one minute per day to an average of under 30 seconds and queues will be reduced from 30 to 10 vehicles. On Saturdays, the delays will be reduced from 43 seconds to 20 seconds on average. I hope you'll agree this is a significant improvement. In order to create the bypass we also need to ask for a rezone tonight of the Diocese's land which was described by Ms. Goucher. The Diocese has agreed to donate the land for the bypass as a result of the rezone. We therefore ask for your support for that as well. This is the same rezone that we asked for when the Home Depot project was before you. We ask again for your support. As you listen to the testimony tonight, we ask that you please remember that none of us are traffic engineers, except Jeff. Not me, not you, not the neighbors. The traffic study says this area will be improved substantially as a result of these improvements. We also ask again that you remember that these plans will be vetted by the Planning Board and its staff. Finally, there will be testimony from opponents about any number of issues that relate to Walmart this evening and we ask that you remember that this is really about this location and what is good for the location. I also ask that you

remember that this expansion is driven by the thousands of people who shop at Manchester's Walmart. It's successful because people like shopping there and because they like saving money, especially in this difficult economy. So we ask for your support in these rezonings and we thank you for your time. I'm here to answer your questions; there are many people here from Walmart's team to answer questions should you wish to ask us any. Thank you for your attention.

Alderman Lopez asked could you give me a little more detail about this light at Gold Street and South Beech Street?

Mr. Jeffrey Dirkwood, Vanesse and Associates, replied the traffic light would be installed at the Gold Street-South Beech Street intersection. It's a standard traffic signal that you have throughout the city. There are two functions of the signal: To allow motorists to exit from Gold Street with much less delay, as was mentioned, from what there is today. We're going to reduce delays and reduce backups so vehicle queuing on the roadways is reduced so the road functions more efficiently. The signal will reduce the backups that can occur across driveways, mitigating that concern from the neighbors. The other function is to allow pedestrians to cross the street. We know that there is a bus stop in the area and this new setup would allow pedestrians to push a button, stop all traffic, and cross the intersection safely. Some of the other additions to the traffic signal will be the ability, under winter month conditions, to have a green light coming up the hill. We understand that as you approach the light you climb up a hill and then plateau, which concerns drivers during the winter months. The traffic signal has a couple of features that would allow it, under snow conditions, just like when you have parking bans in the City during snow conditions, to be put in the flashing position so you don't need to stop. It would essentially flash yellow on South Beech Street and red on Gold Street so it would function as it does there today. The signal also has sensors in the pavement that detect when a vehicle is coming up the hill and can cause it to turn green as you're coming up the hill during winter conditions so you can go through the light and not have to stop. We

spent some time designing this and listening to what the concerns are at this specific location. The other thing it has, similar to the gates that are going to be installed, is the Emergency Vehicle Preemption System. If your Fire Department or ambulance is responding to an emergency in the area, the light turns green in the direction the vehicle is travelling so that vehicle can get through the intersection and clear all the cars out in front of it. A lot of features are built into it for this specific location, tailored to the concerns that we heard.

Alderman Lopez asked is the grade going to change at all?

Mr. Dirkwood replied there will be some plateauing that will take place so we have leveling areas coming into the intersection. Some of the concerns we heard from the Fire Department were about bottoming out of their vehicles and that would be something we would take care of to make sure their vehicles and their apparatus would not bottom out on the hill.

Alderman Lopez stated you mentioned a gate. What do you mean about a gate?

Mr. Dirkwood replied there is a gate system at the end of Gold Street where the bypass would tie back into Gold Street and the gate system is basically like a parking garage where an arm comes down and the gate stays closed except if Police, Fire, or Department of Public Works need to access it.

Alderman J. Roy stated Gold Street between Brown Avenue and South Beech Street, I think I heard it stated that it would be a one way going east. Is that correct?

Mr. Dirkwood replied that's correct.

Alderman J. Roy asked Gold Street between South Beech Street and Bradley Street, is that going to be a one way or a two way?

Mr. Dirkwood replied a two way.

Alderman J. Roy asked it was also stated, I believe I heard, that you're going to reconstruct Gold Street so there would be parking on and a sidewalk? Now that street was reconstructed ten to fifteen years ago and a sidewalk was put on the southside of Gold Street and to me it narrowed the street. How can you fit all that in there?

Ms. Duprey replied let me take that and then Jeff can jump in. There have been statements made by the neighbors that the sidewalks are too wide today, so when we talk about reconstruction we'll be looking at the size of them. By moving the street back and forth, there are some areas where we're able to put in some landscaping and on one side of it we'll be able to create a couple parking spaces. As you look at the plan there are a couple instances of that down the road, but the width of the road will stay the same as it is today. There will be no narrowing of the road.

Alderman J. Roy asked in your traffic calming are you going to put bump-outs there? Is that what you are talking about? You're going to put in a bump-out and there will be room for a car to park?

Ms. Duprey replied yes, that would be part of it because the movement of the street back and forth will slow traffic down; it will force it to be slowed. The addition of the parking and the landscaping will force traffic to slow; the turn into the bypass, it's a 90-degree angle with a stop sign, will force traffic to slow, and that is the specific object of this plan, to deal with a specific complaint to keep that traffic flowing at a slower pace. It is now moving at upwards of 40 miles per hour.

Alderman J. Roy stated I agree those will slow the traffic down. I'm just having a hard time picturing all of that in that space.

Mr. Dirkwood stated there may be some minor areas that are affected. There's a public right of way that exists that the City owns and maintains, which today extends beyond the paved area that's there, so there is some ability in some areas to expand. When we spoke with the Fire Department they absolutely insisted that they need 22 feet of pavement and in some areas they do not have that so there may be areas where we're going to take advantage of the City's right of way and adjust the curb line a foot or two to do that. So there will be some minor curb line adjustments that we are going to have to do, but it would all take place within the City's right of way that's out there. Where exactly that widening would happen was something we talked about with the neighbors at community meetings so they understand that there are areas where we may be able to bump it out and provide some additional landscaping and in other areas we would do some widening, but we can work with them on where exactly that takes place and where this parking takes place as well. There is some flexibility in here with the City's right of way.

Alderman J. Roy asked are you going to work with the neighbors on their landscaping after the construction is done to make their properties look good again?

Mr. Dirkwood replied yes, we talked about making sure we grade back into their driveways and also we know that there are some drainage issues out there. We will make sure that we rebuild the road correctly and take care of all of those accommodations and make sure we do plantings and things that are pleasing to the neighbors.

Ms. Duprey stated and also adding the granite curbing which will enhance the appearance of it as well.

Alderman J. Roy stated I think it's granite on the southside now and you're talking about the northside.

Alderman Osborne stated going back to South Beech Street on the hill where Gold Street starts, I think that would probably be considered the southside. Alderman Garrity, what street do you live on there, is it Kendall?

Alderman Garrity replied Kendall and Gold.

Alderman Osborne stated the street right there runs from South Beech Street all the way down to Calef Road. There will be a lot of traffic coming up and on that street from Calef Road. Has anything been planned for that?

Ms. Duprey replied actually there isn't a lot of traffic that comes there. We've studied that intersection. We know what the numbers are; we have studied them, but we are planning to do some traffic calming in that area. It won't be nearly as extensive as on the other side of Gold Street, but yes, there will be.

Alderman Osborne asked I presume the count you get now isn't much because of AG being closed and everything else, but I'm sure once you have a superstore there you are going to have some traffic.

Ms. Duprey replied right, and these traffic numbers are predictive of that.

Alderman Osborne stated I think it should be considered.

Ms. Duprey replied yes, we are. Thank you, but we are.

Jason Reilly, 130 English Village Road, stated:

I'm speaking in favor of the proposed renovations and changes to the Zoning Board Law. I believe that this is an opportunity for Manchester to expand, not only our tax base, but to improve South Willow Street. It helps improve the business community and it also

helps improve Manchester as a whole. I think it will present a better image than what is currently there and I think that by allowing this change to go through we present a view that we are willing to change and grow and I think that is all in favor of the City and ourselves. I've never seen a corporation in New Hampshire reach out and do what they need to do like what they have proposed in this plan. Growing up Milford we had a number of problems with local industry that led to pollution problems and all of it was legal because the land was zoned for that use. And the land here is zoned for industrial as well, which means we could have power stations or chemical companies or any number of people who could come in and bring in any number of things we don't want in a neighborhood, that we don't want next to our largest business street in this City. I think that rezoning for general business allows us to remain true to the neighborhood and allows us to help with new jobs, new construction jobs and general appeal of the City.

Ron St. Cry, 202 Gold Street, stated:

I do live in the neighborhood you are proposing to change. I feel like David going after Goliath. Some of the things they were speaking about I have concerns over like traffic on the street. I live right near the intersection and really it's horrendous. I've lived on Gold Street for over 60 years and I've seen it change quite a bit. When I was first there it ended where Bradley Street is now, but in my 60 years the street was never widened. It just kept getting smaller and smaller and the traffic kept doubling, then quadrupling. They also spoke about making Gold Street from Calef Road to South Beech Street a one way going east. That's fine except for the bottom of the hill. It is the Fire Department, Police Department, and Highway Department that have all complained about that grade at the bottom of the hill. It is one of the steepest stops in the City and it comes right out onto Calef Road. The traffic...no one seems to have addressed the amount of traffic that flows on Gold Street right now and what the projected increase will be. I understand that the Super Walmarts are open 24/7, while all the businesses in the area close around 9:30 or 10:00, which diminishes quite a bit of traffic in the evening so we can sleep. In the summertime a lot of people have their windows open. They like the fresh air, but all you

can hear is motorcycles and cars going by right now and it's going to increase tremendously. Another thing, if you are able to take a look, Google Manchester and look at the Boston-Maine Railroad track that crosses from Queen City Avenue all the way to Goffs Fall Road. That is a clear line of separation between commercial, industrial and residential areas, which also includes the walking path right now. The small amount of residential homes, about 20 homes on Martin and Claremont Streets, are at the very beginning and those are boxed in. I know it's a tremendous inconvenience for them to get out over there. The amount of traffic is going to increase. One of the speakers said at one of the hearings we had that they expected traffic to increase by 2,000 cars a day. The last survey said 5,000 cars go down there now; with the increase you would be looking at 7,000 cars. I'm not opposed to Walmart being down there, I am opposed to all the traffic from the entire area being funneled onto Gold Street to make it more convenient for people to shop at Walmart.

Rod LaLanne, 111 President Road, stated:

I've heard a lot of issues about traffic on these streets. Has anyone considered traffic on President, Sewall, or Fox Streets? Unless you live there no one knows what the traffic is like. They mentioned some numbers, they brought some numbers out, and they had traffic surveys done. What was used in these traffic surveys? Did they put out electronic counters? Did they put out physical human beings, sitting in cars, counting the traffic? Did they screen the traffic to see how many cars were local or just flow-through traffic? Without this information everyone is guessing. Point two: Has Walmart predicted how many customers per day will visit that 24-hour store? That's another calculation you need to calculate to know the traffic patterns on these different avenues and streets. About four years ago when we had a problem with traffic on President's Road, they decided to put a gate up like the one you are talking about. It stayed up for two weeks, was beautiful, but somebody, somewhere decided it wasn't needed. I guess we cleared up traffic in that two week time period. If these gates are going to be put up, are they going to be coming down in a couple weeks, or a couple months once someone complains that it takes too long to

get to Walmart? You need to look at the whole area, not just one small piece of a neighborhood. Gold Street is horrendous to drive on, but there are other streets. If you stop cars on one street, people are going to find the shortest distance between two points; they are going to go through neighborhoods and they are going to go fast. I have no problem with Walmart coming in. Personally, I believe a store of that size would be better suited on the outlying stretches of Manchester: Route 3A, Route 3, Route 114, Route 101, or Route 28.

Sean Shisko, 139 Young Street, stated:

I'm speaking tonight on behalf of Walmart. I believe this is something the Aldermen and Mayor need to look at as a bigger picture than just traffic. It seems to me, judging from the laughter from the crowd, the traffic study seems to be the biggest issue. If that is the case, I challenge anybody here to go to any Walmart and show me traffic problems. I've been to a ton of Walmarts, as I'm sure everybody in this room has, and it seems to me that they have the right people to get their stuff down pat to know what to do in order to have traffic flow taken care of. I don't know of any neighborhood that has diminished because of Walmart coming into it. Also, it would be unfair on behalf of the Aldermen to only consider one neighborhood's point of view. I understand that this will adversely affect them more than everyone else in the City, but as Mayor and Aldermen you know you're representing the whole City. This is a project that will benefit everybody in Manchester. Right now Manchester has 4,000 people unemployed. This project is talking 100 extra jobs, additional construction jobs and right now I don't think we're in a state, with a difficult economy, where we can afford to be picky when someone is offering to give us free road improvements, new jobs, additional construction work, and decreased crime because there will be fewer people unemployed. I would rather have people making roads better than people walking the streets unemployed. You have a company here that's willing to do all that and more on behalf of the taxpayers. This will also save the people who shop there tons of money per year, not to mention increasing the competition from the other supermarkets for the people who do not shop at Walmart by

lowering their prices allowing them to save money. All around this is a benefit for everyone in the City. I understand that for people who live in the area it's fearsome for them and I could understand not wanting tons and tons of cars driving by my road, but having been involved with traffic studies before, I would imagine that the traffic study done by Walmart was probably the most sophisticated traffic study that can be done; it's probably the most accurate traffic study that can be done until the actual traffic begins. That being said, I urge to all to vote on behalf of the whole City of Manchester and not just one portion as we really, truly can use the benefit of a large corporation that wants to move into an area where no one else is doing anything.

Russell Spaulding, 321 Gold Street, stated:

I have three problems with this: traffic, traffic, and traffic. There are a lot of details missing in this. I live above the cut off and they say they're going to have bump-outs and swerving roads. If I were sitting on your side I wouldn't be able to vote consciously to vote yes, this is good or no, this is not good. You have no information in front of you. You should have a big chart in front up there showing you what this is going to look like. You have to have some details on what they are going to do. I have no idea what a gate looks like. Like the gentleman before me said, several years ago when Volkswagen wanted their zoning changed we had a raffle. Mr. Mackenzie put a jersey barrier up, Gold Street was fine, traffic flowed beautifully, but then some 67 year-old lady couldn't find her way home, the next day the barrier went down, we had traffic, and Volkswagen had their zoning changed. This project scares me: If all of these things come in and then some 67 year-old lady or the Fire Department or an ambulance gets lost out there, all of these elements that are suppose to help traffic are going to going to hurt it.

Michael Hammer, 1290 South Beech Street, stated:

I am a consultant in land development and land planning and an adjunct faculty member at Wentworth where I teach Transportation Design among other things. From a business standpoint, from the Walmart point of view, this is a win-win situation. It's an ideal

situation because they have high visibility from the highway, close access to Routes 93 and 101, and the size of the lot is about 50% larger than what they already have, so it goes towards their development goals that they have already planned out. The one thing that they are really grappling with is the transportation situation. They are trying to put ten pounds in a five pound bag. These roads existed way before commercial retail shopping was the rage. My neighbor remembers when South Beech Street was a dirt road. These roads weren't originally designed to accommodate this kind of traffic. I hear a lot of discussion about Gold Street and no discussion at all about South Beech Street. As it is, during the rush hours the traffic over there is a nightmare: There aren't enough signals, there aren't enough lights, and you really can't widen the roads because all of the houses are practically on top of the road. When it was originally developed it was never intended to have this kind of traffic. They have concentrated all of their concerns on Gold Street because access from South Willow Street is a disaster. You can't take a left off of South Willow onto Gold Street because there is an island in the way. You couldn't remove that island because the national and New Hampshire highway standards won't allow that kind of a turn that close to an off ramp. Insofar as the Archdiocese is interested in rezoning for multifamily, and I keep hearing people talk about increasing the tax base, does the current owner of the parcel that used to be at the Associated Grocers not pay taxes currently or are they exempt? Furthermore, Walmart is already paying taxes on their existing land. They are not agreeing to continue paying taxes on that parcel out of the goodness of their heart; they are doing it because they are bound by law. They have to pay taxes just like the rest of us. I don't see an increase to the tax rolls. Moreover, if you bring in multifamily housing, residential development is a net loss in terms of tax revenue as opposed to a net gain. I'll sum it up briefly: the more people that live over there, the more services we'll have to provide. We're talking about tight budgets now; the City doesn't need to extent itself further to benefit someone who doesn't live here who has an existing business already.

Ken Laderbush, 91 Sewall Street, stated:

I don't think that anybody here has a problem with Walmart and everybody has already gotten the view that the biggest issue is traffic. We lost the opportunity several years ago when we put that bike lane in to be able to route the traffic and keep it out of the residential areas. At the rate they are going some of the ideas sound great, but this is New England and six months out of the year we have bad driving conditions. It's a conical hill. We have police who are dispatched there almost every bad storm to keep cars from going down Beech or Gold Street because the driving conditions have to be taken care of by the city before it can actually be used. That's not going to go away. We don't have any traffic lights at the bottom of South Beech where the intersection to the interstate is or into the housing development down by the river, which is a bad intersection and has a lot of accidents and it's not being addressed. My concern here is not for Walmart. My concern here is for the residents of the area. I think that Walmart could make this work, but they are going to have to find a way to keep the traffic out of those neighborhoods. It is not feasible to make those roads good for winter time use, for heavy traffic. I want to remind you gentlemen that you work for the residents of this City, not for corporations and after the budget decision that was made recently a lot of us have taken the time to think this out and a lot of incumbents' jobs are at stake. We didn't like that call and this one could turn sour real fast.

Richard Remillard, 289 Gold Street, stated:

I want to thank you guys because basically you are helping us. We can't afford to have the professionals behind us. We live on Gold Street and we look to you for some protection. I know that my wife and I, along with approximately two dozen families on Gold Street, have been impacted by what has been going on since 2005; it's an ongoing process. The worst scenario is the one that's being presented right now. Am I against Walmart? Not at all, but I am totally against the development of Gold Street. At one point, Gold Street was suppose to bring pride to the Queen City. We were told earlier by the attorney for Walmart that Walmart was going to be the gateway to the City of

Manchester: This narrow little street that is going to bump in and bump out? Earlier in 2005 we were taking a look at some of the things the Queen City could have been proud of: There was going to be parking on each side, there was going to be a sidewalk on each side, there was going to be a road we could be proud of. It was going to bring to Manchester this gateway appearance, but now the road just won't work. At an earlier meeting, with the representatives of Walmart, with the traffic engineer Jeff Dirkwood, he presented his facts showing that over several days in December when he did a traffic study, Gold Street had 5,000 vehicles that went through it, with 80% of them driving over 40 miles per hour. When questioned he admitted this project would bring a minimum of 10,000 vehicles on this same narrow street. We did end up having a solution at one time, but it fell through. Can we revisit that solution where we could be proud of the street?

Claudette Heiring, 115 Amory Street, stated:

I'd like to talk about the past, present, and future of not just one street, but that location itself. I remember as a child my father, Sergeant Roland Beyo, and I went to the grand opening of AG. I was all excited as a little girl. There was free food, free drinks and he said to me, "Remember, Claudette, nothing is free, somebody has to pay for it." He meant that AG paid for the advertising and the food. Now as I'm older and hearing about the traffic situation in that section of the City...and I think it's great that I can get to work at Walmart in Bedford before anyone else, under any weather conditions because I'm near a Fire Department and I have great plowing and there is no problem. But going back to the subject, Walmart is willing to pay for this bypass. Manchester cannot afford this bypass and we cannot afford to bypass this opportunity. This opportunity would not only have shopping in this area for multiple generations, but the bypass that is actually needed now will be given to us shortly if we okay Walmart.

Ermanna Asselin, 1043 S. Beech Street, stated:

I'm here to say the traffic is horrible. South Beech is already a highway. I'm not against Walmart; I'm just against the traffic. I want to protect my neighborhood and my home. I

don't want to be forced to move because of the traffic. I'm just here to reiterate what everybody else said. The light between South Beech and Gold Street should not happen because no one knows those roads; they are horrible and full of traffic.

Patty Robb, 10 Mapleton Road, stated:

I live at 10 Mapleton Road, which is at the top of Beech Street from Brown Avenue. I think it's selfish for someone not facing the problems we may face not to think about our concerns. We pay high taxes and are expected to want this proposal to pass because it will bring jobs to Manchester. The construction jobs created will disappear as soon as Walmart is built. As far as the jobs in the store, does that include the people who will be transferring over from the other Walmart? My second concern is living at the top of the hill. In the winter time it's nearly impossible for a lot of cars to make it up that hill. We're only three blocks away from Gold Street. So what is going to happen? That is a huge effect that hasn't been brought up today. The cars are still going to be able to turn onto our road. In the winter time are we going to have a system where the traffic can continue going up the hill when they can't even make it up the hill? My concern is the traffic through there. We already have a humongous amount of traffic as it is. We can't sit in our back yard because of the traffic. I can believe that this will at least bring 250 to 500 more cars a day, if not in half a day. I do love Walmart; I shop at Walmart. When I first heard of the idea I loved the idea of being able to walk to Walmart, but it's also a residential area. We have to think about our children. I want to be able to walk my dog and not have to worry about the cars. I've already had a cat hit by a car. Adding all these cars to the area, how am I going to be able to walk my dog? It used to take me five minutes to get to the grocery store, but now it's going to take me 20 minutes. I know that's selfish. We need the jobs, I'm a big supporter of jobs, but why should we have to pay for that?

Steven Lee, 59 Cinnamon Drive, Goffstown stated:

I am the Walmart store manager for the current location on Keller Street. I'm here to present over 1,000 petitions from my customers, mostly Manchester residents, in favor of the relocation. To answer a previous question, the 100 jobs are in addition to the 250 associated we currently have. I'd also like to add that if the new location is approved, Walmart would be able to provide better customer service with wider aisles, improved signing, and the addition of a grocery department that would carry produce, deli and bakery and also maintain our price leadership and continue to save people money so they can live better.

Beverly LaBelle, 35 Log Street, stated:

I'm currently employed by Walmart, which I love. This move will make Walmart a better employer and a better company to serve the citizens of Manchester. In the time I have worked for them, I have tripled my salary since 1992. My salary supports myself and I help provide for a handicapped relative in my family. As far as the woman who said she wouldn't be able to walk her dog, if you go outside the Bedford store we have a picnic area, a weeping willow tree, and a nice tree lined parking lot. During my lunch break I witness several people walking their dogs along the area. As far as the traffic in Manchester, I left Manchester seven years ago for Texas and when I returned home I saw an amazing transformation in Manchester. The airport, the traffic; you're not going to avoid those with the growth that we have seen. I believe we're going to be the second Boston in New England. I think having Walmart come into this community and offer what they are going to do would be a lot better than what someone else could do to it. Walmart is also a company that really cares about their carbon footprint. You couldn't ask for a better company not to pollute your area in order to do what they need to do.

Mariette Roux, 41 Beech Hill Avenue, stated:

Quite a few people have said this and I'm just going to reiterate it: We are talking about a residential neighborhood. I work at Bedford Hills, which is a nursing facility behind the

Walmart. It's not a residential neighborhood; it's a single street leading up from Second Street in Manchester. There is a Hannaford's Shopping Plaza, there's Walmart and a nursing facility behind. It's not a residential neighborhood and the same with the Walmart on Keller Street. You're talking about streaming traffic through a residential community. I want to remind the Aldermen that it's not just Gold Street that's affected. Beech Hill Avenue is also used as a short cut from South Beech Street to the Gold Street area and John Divine Drive. Beech Hill Avenue is a community of town homes and subsidized housing. There are many, many children; the traffic is unbelievable; there is parking on both sides of the street; it is a very congested area with lots of families and lots of children. I want you to consider when you are looking at these plans Beech Hill Avenue and Beech Hill Drive as well as Gold Street.

Rene Fortin, 116 Gold Street, stated:

I enjoy Walmart; I have no issue with Walmart. We look forward to the wider aisles. If only we could have a wider street that can lead people to the wider aisles, it would be a win-win situation. Back in 2005, Alderman Garrity had worked out a plan where Gold Street westbound at South Beech would have a right turn lane that would eliminate some of the stacking that we experience on Gold Street heading westbound. With the traffic light, if it does materialize, it seems to be an acceptable way to get traffic moving and mitigate the inconvenience the neighbors were experiencing. Obviously I'm not a traffic engineer and I was reminded of that tonight, but if you live there you don't have to be a traffic engineer. When people have to go to the back side of their mailboxes to retrieve mail because they don't dare to stand in the street that is 20 to 21 feet wide, I don't see how you are going to put parking, bump-outs, landscaping. I don't know where you are going to put cars. One other problem is what works on paper quite often doesn't work in reality. I would ask the Board to give this very serious consideration.

Gerald Zahn, 732 S. Mammoth Road, stated:

I live on the other side of Manchester so I bring a different perspective today. I'm more concerned about a project of this magnitude and the benefit or impact it has on the City long term. I think there is a tendency in projects of this nature for developers to basically do the minimum of what they are offering and that's the normal course of doing business. There are a lot of potential infrastructure issues that could have long term costs to the City of Manchester that all of us would have to pay for. The only thing I would ask you this evening is as this project is vetted and goes forward that the full breadth of all the issues are considered: the cost to the City, issues with respect to traffic patterns on South Willow Street, South Beech Street and even I-293. All those things could have a potential cost impact to the City in the future. We need to be careful not to buy into a short term opportunity that potentially has a lot of costs long term for the City.

Frank W. Weaver, 8 Derry Street, stated:

Walmart concedes that when it comes to town it's out to eliminate competitors. Any store it opens can crush our local groceries, pharmacies, hardware stores, clothing stores and other retailers, not just by being more efficient and not with superior service, but by slashing prices below what they pay for the products, a tactic known as predatory pricing. Even Walmart can't sell below cost and stay in business, no trick to it. Walmart has 4,400 stores. It can lose money at the one in your area until the cows come home and not hurt its company's bottom line one bit. But your local stores don't have a global network of stores to subsidize them, so Walmart can sit on top of them with a losing hand and still win. This isn't competition, it's mugging. When it's over, when the local competitors have bled to death, this Walmart's prices rise. Then the dollars you spend there are used to subsidize another mugging down the road. I hear you saying that at least Walmart is a job creator for our communities. Sorry, no. By crushing local businesses, this giant eliminates three decent jobs for every two poorly paid, part time, high turnover Walmart jobs it creates. It's an extractor of community wealth, not a creator. It doesn't buy locally, it doesn't bank locally, it doesn't advertise locally. In Kirksville, Missouri, a Walmart

supercenter opened a few years ago and in short order four clothing stores, four grocery stores, a stationary store, a fabric store and a lawn and garden center were gone. And with their demise, the Kirksville's *Daily Express*, the local newspaper, has lost major ad revenue and is struggling. Townspeople now go to Walmart or have to leave town to shop. The super center sits there on the edge of Kirksville like a demonic tombstone sucking up local money and channeling it to Bentonville where a portion of it can be used as capital for Walmart's assault on the next Kirksville. Is this what we want for Manchester?

Rick Bilodeau, 358 Gold Street, stated:

I've lived at 358 Gold Street for 54 years so I've seen a lot of things come and go. Curious...at one of the meetings we had it was estimated 1,000 more vehicles a day would go down Gold Street. Considering we already have 5,000 cars going down the road, that's 500 cars an hour in a 12 hour period, or nine cars a minute. When we did the Home Depot study, from what we were told 8,000 cars a day, which is only 665 cars an hour on Gold Street, would pass through. I heard today that one of the estimates we heard was 10,000 cars. We're told the traffic on top of Gold Street is going to move a lot faster. Even if the light cycle is on a two minute rotation, that's going to back up 22 cars on average in two minutes. Twenty-two cars are going to come by about thirteen houses, so I don't see that reducing traffic on Gold Street. When they did the study for the number of cars on Gold Street, I'm curious to know if that was before or after they planned on blocked off all the other streets. What will the traffic be like during the holiday season? I heard a comment before that there aren't a lot of traffic jams around Walmart, but if you try to go near the Walmart that is on Keller Street during Christmas, it's backed up all the way to South Willow Street and past the Post Office on the other side. Again, nothing against Walmart, but as a lifelong resident of Gold Street, and I pay taxes, over \$4,000 a year...Wouldn't it be easier, and wouldn't it save Walmart money, and prevent a lot of the traffic issues if you make Gold Street one way down? You can put the electric gate you want to put up. I asked that question last time about the gate so emergency vehicles

could get down, and the City said it wasn't really crazy about the traffic gates. If you're going to put one there anyways, you can save all that time going through the old cemetery property and do it on Gold Street. Also, isn't it possible to build a road from Gold Street to Goffs Fall Road, north to south, where the old railroad bypass is and use that as a Gold Street bypass, which would keep traffic out of the residential areas, helping reduce traffic on Gold Street, Sewall Street, President Road, South Beech Street, and South Willow Street? Last holiday season, before Walmart was there, trying to back out of my driveway, I had to wait for 74 cars to go by before I could get out and that's before the added traffic. Again, nothing against Walmart, it's the traffic on Gold Street. It's not just the traffic. I have children, I have grandchildren, and it's the safety of the people on that road. We do have a sidewalk on the street; they put all of the mailboxes in the middle of the sidewalk so it cannot be plowed in the winter so as the kids are walking to the bus stops there is no place to go. A gentleman on the Board talked about Gold Street not being wide enough. Before I left I measured it with one of my neighbors. In front of my house it's only 20 feet wide.

Ron Robert, 350 Gold Street, stated:

They're talking about taking Gold Street where the easement is for the City. Forty years ago, the houses on Gold Street were built in the wrong spot because the street was in the wrong spot. If they take the easement on the north side of Gold Street, people are going to lose the steps to get into their house. That's how far up the street is. I really can't see them widening the street enough to get parking on the street when it's 20 feet now and the Fire Department wants a minimum of 21 feet and you need another five feet for a car: Where is the land going to come from? We won't be able to park in our driveways because our driveways are all going to be shortened. I had to submit a special plan for my stairs on the front of my house when my stairs tipped back. The City didn't want to let me put stairs up because it was too close to the street. Now they are going to have cars parked on my front steps. It doesn't make sense, not even making the end of Gold Street one way. By making that one way, they are going to back up the traffic on the bottom of

Beech Street so people can't go down to Brown Avenue to get onto the highway. They are all going to have to go down Beech Street to get on the highway. Traffic is an issue now and they are only going to make it worse by moving more cars over. Their solution of closing a bunch of streets doesn't make sense. If you want to move traffic you have to make more streets, not fewer streets.

Mike Egan, 100 Thomas Street, stated:

First of all, I always tell my wife that I love Walmart. I love coming home with an \$8 golf shirt. It's a great store with great prices. The study I heard tonight, I don't see any talk about Ross Avenue or the traffic coming from Brown Avenue up through our neighborhoods of Kenberma Street, Thomas Street onto Frontage Road then onto Ross Street, then dumping out onto Gold Street for Walmart. There is no mention of any study like that. Right now we deal with speed bumps in our area to curtail the traffic we already have. We're even talking about putting in another speed bump, so we already are getting traffic that is headed for John Devine Drive and Gold Streets. Another thousand more cars we don't need going through our neighborhoods. Walmart has a good plan, but we don't want it funneled through our neighborhoods. The impact of 30 to 40 more tractor trailers on John Devine Drive was not mentioned tonight. The thousand petitioners who signed at Walmart are all in favor of that. I would like to get that list because they are personally going to become my friends as they drive through my neighborhood. South Willow Street has been designed to take the business traffic. Take all the traffic for this new store and funnel it through South Willow onto John Devine to the new store. Don't come through our neighborhoods. I'm asking the Board tonight to table this whole matter. I really appreciate Mike Garrity being our Alderman. Table it so the residents can study it more because this is imperfect as it was presented to us tonight.

Ray Asselin, 82 Gold Street, stated:

I've been a resident for 35 years on Gold Street. I live in the west side of Gold Street from Calef to Beech Street, half way on the hill and that's a regular drag strip. People go

up that hill at 40-45 miles per hour constantly. The three issues I do have are speed; commercial traffic can't be stopped on that street because there are constantly trucks going up and down the street; and I have a 36 foot RV with a truck to pull it, which averages 50 feet. If they turn that into a one way, I have no access to my driveway. Because of the way Gold Street is pitched at the bottom at Calef, I have to go up the hill and then down the hill. I don't have any issues against Walmart, only against the traffic on Gold Street.

Pamela Ramalho, 399 Gold Street, stated:

I know a lot of people are complaining about the traffic, but we've lived there for about nine years and a lot of people in the area know we're always outside in our front yard. A lot of those cars that they are talking about are the same cars that go up and down the street every day. Personally, we have been counting the cars and I go up and down the street five or six times every day; same thing for my husband and son. If you take everyone in the neighborhood and they go up and down that street five times a day and you multiply that, that's probably 5,000. Putting the bypass through will not affect the traffic right there; it's the same people going up and down the street all the time.

Robert Ramalho, 399 Gold Street, stated:

There is a building down there and it's sold now, but it's just sitting there. Eventually something is going to happen with that building. Why not take the hand out from Walmart? We're all going through this economy together. We're going to have 100 plus jobs out there. That might not mean too much to somebody who is working right now, but someone who isn't working it might mean a lot to. The other thing is, as far as doing something with the street, I'm all for it, 110%. An hour before I came here, I witnessed my neighbor's little girl almost get hit by a car because of the speeding on the street. The 25 mile per hour signs don't do it. I haven't seen a better plan and I understand that you're not going to please everybody, but I'm all for it.

Glenn Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

Even though I live in Manchester, New Hampshire, I rarely go to the Walmart on Keller Street. I go to the Walmart in Bedford. It has nothing to do with size; it has to do with traffic. I'm in favor of Walmart building where you want to put them. What I'm not in favor of is not taking care of the neighborhood. Make sure that the people who live there don't lose any of their rights. When I hear citizens say they've been there 20-30 years, and if you build the road the way you're going to built it, they can't get their RVs in there, but they pay a license to have that, that's disturbing. When Home Depot wanted to build there, the Alderman from Ward 9 had a great rapport with Home Depot and he probably does with Walmart too, but the proposal is somewhat different and so is the housing. Now we're talking about rezoning. I think it's important that the neighborhood is cared for. These people still have to live there when this is all over. You don't allow people to put front steps on their house because they are too close to the road and now you're going to park cars on their front steps? There should be a way where everyone can live within their means. This is a good thing for the City. I wish they had more room where they were to expand there: That would have been a better bet. Please, before you decide tonight, make sure the neighborhood is cared for. They are the taxpayers who have been paying the taxes there all this time, so don't do wrong by them.

Shirley Durette, 175 Chestnut Street, stated:

I work for Walmart and I believe if they put in another Walmart somewhere else I think a lot of people are going to suffer. Not only that, but I also feel that with the bus situation being the way it is, I think that is also wrong. I think what we have to do is take care of one thing at a time and I think the bus service should come first before anything else because there are a lot of people who rely on the buses to get back and forth to everywhere they have to go. I think as far as creating another Walmart away from Keller Road and putting it somewhere else where the traffic is congested to begin with, I think that's wrong.

Mayor Guinta advised that all those wishing to speak have been heard. The testimony presented will be referred to the Committee on Bills on Second Reading to be taken under advisement with reports to be made to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen later this evening.

*This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented, and on motion of **Alderman J. Roy**, duly seconded by **Alderman Pinard**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk