

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

October 6, 2009

7:00 PM

Mayor Guinta called the meeting to order.

Mayor Guinta called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Ouellette.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Absent: Alderman DeVries

Mayor Guinta 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 three minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair. Mayor Guinta 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.

Leo Pepino, 73 Walnut Circle, stated:

I'm here tonight about this investigation. What bothers me after reading the article is the statements that were made about a powerful official. If that was said at the meeting six or seven months ago, why didn't it come out the next day? Why is it coming out now? I can't understand it. You say that you want the public to know, but they should have known eight months ago, right after the meeting. After reading about a powerful official, I realized that the only powerful officials in the City of Manchester are the people in front of me, this Board. It says it happened a few years ago, but it doesn't say how many years ago. I'm reading this and it is full of legal jargon: alleged, suspicion, allegations, and suggestions. There are two people in here I don't even know. I have no idea who they are

or what they have done. According to this letter, they appear to be a couple of monsters. The department head doesn't want to tell anybody, I guess. I'm not sure. If I were sitting on this Board, the department head would be sitting where I am and he would be asked a question: Who is the powerful official who talked you into doing this? He broke policies and procedures. If he would not answer it, I would fire him on the spot. I'm serious and I don't know these people. Is the AG involved in this in any way? I hope you talk about this tonight and it is not just another election ploy.

Alderman Lopez stated we're not allowed to get into dialogue.

Dave Bigelow, 335 Laurel Street, stated:

You may notice that this shirt is from the Manchester Animal Shelter. I recently went to their October Fundraiser. Even though I support the Animal Shelter, I don't support having a dog park at the dump. There is an interesting history that has gone along with this. On December 2nd, the Lands and Building Committee had a discussion about the dog park. Jane Beaulieu had a planned speech and presentation with drawings and diagrams about her plans for the park. People who work for the dog park and were at that Committee hearing weren't told they would be able to speak at it. Therefore, we had nothing prepared. George Smith agrees with Jane Beaulieu's plans for the park. He recommended that she proceed with her plans. The dog park people have to wait. He recommended that the Parks and Recreation Commission come up with a recommendation for a dog park site. The Committee unanimously voted to have that happen. At the end of April, after the recommendation was made between the two Board meetings, I published a letter in the Manchester Express wondering what was taking so long with the site recommendations. Also, it had some criteria and suggestions for what you should be looking for when you build a dog park. One of them suggested that if you already have a confined space with available parking you should go there because that saves money on that part so you can purchase other things for the dog park. I figured that with those recommendations, Chuck would be able to find a site that met those. He did with the West Side Ice Arena. Mysteriously enough, when I went to the May 5th Board of Aldermen meeting, I found out from Chuck that his recommendation was turned down, but it was never presented to or voted on by the Committee. When I called my Alderman, Ed Osborne, he didn't know there was a recommendation. There was a letter in the May 18th Union Express questioning how this could happen without a meeting or a vote. I thought it would be interesting if the next site proposed was the town dump or the land fill. As of September 1st, that became the site recommendation out of the four. There is no parking there or on Brown Avenue. The only site that has parking is the West Side Ice Arena. I'm against the dump. By favorite pick would be the Ice Arena. Down the road, if

there was ever a second dog park, I would put it at the Riverfront Park, which is former Jac Pac land. My main reason is to prevent the tragedy of the person who died in the river. Currently, there is a hole in the catwalk that accesses the bridge. A dog park would show holes in the fence real fast.

Glenn R.J. Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

It amazes me how many investigations have occurred in the last 18 months. Not too long ago it was discovered that for the last four years \$104,000 to \$134,000 was taken out of the recycling account by improper people. Once the investigation was made, they couldn't prove who it was so it was dropped. When it was asked how often we audit our departments an Alderman replied yearly. Shame on that Alderman because the reason they found out was because for four years it hadn't been audited and that's how they discovered the missing money. The people who wanted to build a Senior Citizens Center were told that it could not be built where the baseball park is because it was a disaster area and might kill people, but you turned around and build a 7,500 seat baseball field. Where was the danger then? How about the dog licensing? We have over \$1,600 missing. Where has the investigation been over the last eight months? It is an election year and now things are coming up. Isn't it sad that we have to wait over two years to get the people's job done? There is something wrong with that system. We should have a Board of Mayor and Aldermen that works to do the people's business and not their personal agendas. The last thing I want to talk about is elections. You did not follow the City Charter to call a special election in Ward 12. All of you are sworn to follow the state constitution and to follow the City Charter. It is not being done in many cases. For the last ten years, I have been a poll inspector in Ward 3. Because I am an undeclared voter I would have to declare a party in order to be a ballot inspector. I will not be doing that anymore. That is against my constitutional right. We should not be told how to vote. The law needs to be changed at the state level. Fifteen years ago the Democrats and Republicans promised the state, towns and cities that they would provide enough workers at all the polls. They are not. I am now sending this to the Supreme Court. I am challenging the constitution because the majority of people in this City are registered undeclared and our votes should be considered as well.

Josette White, 508 South Main Street, stated:

I wanted to share with you a number of questions that surround the legitimacy of the tax cap gimmick scheduled for a vote in November. As most of you know, the tax cap gimmick was ruled illegal in Merrimack County Superior Court. Questions of legality continue to surround the proposal that the Manchester voters will decide on this November. We appreciate the efforts of the Board of Aldermen to do their due diligence

and get an answer for the people of Manchester before this political gimmick goes to a vote. The tax cap gimmick question has been moved to the New Hampshire Supreme Court and we hope the people will know if it is legal before Election Day. Last week we had an informational forum where economic experts and City leaders highlighted not only that the cap was unworkable and poorly written, but how it also circumvents the City's two year budget cycle and would have harmful effects not only on the Airport, which brings in \$1 billion in state and local revenue, but also on the City's bond rating. It is likely to cost the City of Manchester much more in the future. Additionally, a report by economist Brian Gotlieb was released last week that demonstrates that an artificial tax and expenditure limitation, like the proposal before Manchester, put local government on auto pilot and would have an undesirable fiscal, economic, demographic and social affects. I hope all of you have had an opportunity to review it, but I would like to take a moment to share some of the key aspects. Economist Gotlieb compiled two decades worth of data and detailed information from a number of cities in New Hampshire. The report uses Franklin, which has had the longest history of a tax and expenditure limitation in the state of New Hampshire, as an example. The mayor of Franklin was invited here to show that it has had a detrimental impact on cities with them. For example, on the basis of employment and business growth in industrial and commercial property evaluations, population growth, in the addition of a skilled and educated work force, the City of Franklin performs much worse than the City of Manchester and other cities of comparable size. Commercial and industrial tax bases have grown more slowly in a tax and expenditure cap community, causing more of a tax burden to be shifted onto residential property owners. Investments in infrastructure, capital expenditures, schools and libraries are most affected by caps, both in New Hampshire and nationally. Tax and expenditure caps undermine long term economic viability of a community. Education consistently bears the brunt of caps. There is a lot more information in this report and I brought copies with me if you haven't had a chance to review it. I wanted to make sure that you saw it and implore you to give it the due diligence and attention that you gave the report from the City Finance Office and the Airport director about the negative consequences of these caps.

Phil Greazzo, 139 Parker Street, stated:

Unlike Ms. White, I am not paid to be here and I support the voters of Manchester having their voice heard on how the City spends its money. It will be going to the Supreme Court. I do believe they will wait to see if it passes. If it doesn't pass, there is nothing for them to do. With that said, I'm not here to speak about that. I'm here to talk about the dog park. I saw on the agenda tonight that the proposed area at Crescent and Brown Avenues. The cross structure that Chuck DePrima put together shows that it would cost the City

\$60,000 to build the dog park. I'm opposed to the City spending a dime on the dog park. We can do it for free and this is a perfect example of what's wrong with City government in Manchester. Whenever someone offers something for free, it ends up costing tens of thousands of dollars before it comes to fruition. The preferred choice at Dunbarton Road is estimated to cost \$85,000. Again, I am opposed to that. I think we can do this for free. I think there are other areas in the City that are usable that already have parking, snow removal, trash removal and water on site. They don't need to be improved. All they need is fencing. We can offer the fencing and maintenance. It shouldn't cost the City of Manchester a dime. It shouldn't cost anything to the taxpayers and it shouldn't burden them. If it does, I respectfully request that you don't build a dog park to the tune of \$85,000 or \$65,000. There are a few other sites that weren't given due consideration and I would ask that you keep an open mind and look at those sites and not spend tens of thousands to build a free dog park.

Billy Dodd, Ward 7, stated:

The gentleman who had the fire on Trahan Street last week who went in and saved his mother should be recommended by the City Board for the Carnegie Hero Award. For a guy to go back in and do that, he deserves it. We're going to talk about number tonight. This is a page that I was reading at work. It was upside down and someone said that they have never seen an obituary page with that many pictures. I said that it was all the people who were running for office in the City. There are about 30 people running. Those of you that survived, I hope that you are going to be a representative for the people and not a politician. Alderman Shea, I wish I would have known that you were conducting a survey because I would have contacted you and said I'm in favor of the cap. I'm in favor of it because it is going to cost us a lot of money down the road. We have a lot of City stimulus jobs that you want to fill. It brings money in now, but it is going to cost the taxpayers money down the road. About ten years ago, the school budget was around \$80 million. If we hadn't had some restraints on it in the last couple of years, we would be sitting on \$150 or \$160 million now. It would have doubled in ten years. I drive a school bus in the City. Some of the white stop lines are tight. I contacted my supervisor to have him contact the Highway Department to see if we can get some of them moved back. The Highway Department said that they could do it, but we're going to charge the MTA to move them back. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense when the safety of the kids is involved. I hope the City can do a better job with snow plowing this year. Are two campaign signs allowed on each lot? If you walk around the City you see a lot more. I bought a decibel meter from Radio Shack. The level in here tonight has been around 80. The sheet shows that 80-85 decibels is a lot louder than an ordinary conversation. Imagine living on a street with motorcycles going by. The state says that they can test at

106 decibels. I did some testing on my own. You would be surprised what's out there. I'm testing the way the EPA does it. What I don't understand about the EPA and state inspections is the EPA has stickers on every vehicle from trucks to motorcycles that talk about noise levels and emissions standards. It is illegal to modify them from the way they come from the factory, but 80 decibels is the limit that the federal government sets for motorcycles, yet New Hampshire says 106 is acceptable. Let them ride by your house every night. We have roads in the City where you don't allow trucks and they only emit 85 decibels, but you let a motorcycle run anywhere in the City. The City can also set its own Ordinances. The Police Chief needs to go out and get meters that are certified by the state and then he needs to use them. The noise level in this City is absolutely atrocious.

Andrea Hober, 190 Oak Hill Avenue, stated:

I understand from yesterday's Union Leader that you are going to discuss the McIntyre Ski proposal this evening. They had a neighborhood meeting for us to discuss the concept. I'm in agreement that it is a great fit for the area. The original notes stated that the ski area was going to maintain the land around Weston Tower. I found out through the Enterprise Manager that that's not on the table anymore with the ski area plan. I appreciate that. I'm requesting that if anything is done in the future with the Weston Tower area that it be brought back to the neighborhood and the residents of the City because it is an area for the City so we can all decide what should be allowed in that spot. I understand that they voted down that area as a dog park area. I really appreciate that. McIntyre Ski Area had a better idea of using it for bike and hiking trails for their day camp program. Please keep us posted on what's done. Alderman Gatsas, I appreciate all the efforts that you made with the Parks and Recreation Department in working with us.

Mayor Guinta advised that if there was no one else present wishing to speak, all comments would be taken under advisement and further receive and file any written documentation presented.

Mayor Guinta advised if there is no further business, on motion of Alderman Osborne, duly seconded by Alderman Pinard, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk