

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

December 15, 2009

7:00 PM

Mayor Guinta called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Absent: Aldermen DeVries, Garrity

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.

Mayor Guinta stated anyone who is here for item G, I want to let them know that it is being referred to Committee and it will not be dealt with until sometime in January at the earliest.

Mr. Billy Dodd, Ward 7, stated:

I'd like to bring your attention to something. Last month I talked to you about the I-Pass parking and I mentioned the \$35 giveaway. Shortly after that, I received a letter from the Parking Manager that said I was mistaken and the only thing that was being given away was the \$10 credit that was going to be placed on the unit. I was not mistaken because the article in the paper that I was referring to states that to encourage enrollment, the City is offering charter memberships that would waive the \$25 membership fee and include a \$10 parking credit. I called down to the Parking Division today and I inquired. The unit would cost me \$25 and it would come with \$10 credit on it. When I started inquiring about the \$25 membership fee they had no idea what I was talking about. The reporter is quoting someone as saying it. Maybe you might want to ask your parking czar what the \$25 membership fee is. That's what I was quoting with the \$25 annual membership fee. Maybe you want to answer that question. There was another thing in one of the smaller papers and it was what will bring the fans back to the Monarch games. It seems the fan numbers have been dropping every year. There are 4,000 fewer than when they first opened. I can tell you what will bring the fans back. If you remember, for those of you who voted on this, in the original bond money there was a pool of money that was set aside for the manager of the civic center to sell the tickets to the hockey game at one price and pull a little bit of money out of this pool. You might want to go back and put more money into that pool because the pool has run out. That's why your fan base is dropping. While we are talking about the civic center, I was talking with one of the Aldermen. Do you know what it cost you to bond the civic center? It is roughly 1,000 homes in the City that pay \$5,000 a year in taxes that you gave up because you were using that money to pay for meals and rooms to help pay for the civic center. You gave up that money to pay for the civic center and now it has taken 5,000 homes to do the work that is not getting done. The last thing is the issue that you have before you

on the Pandora Building. When you go to consider this, if you do so tonight, remember to look at 79-E:8, covenant to protect the public benefit. Make sure you look at number two. You might be able to extend the amount of time this project has a covenant over it.

Ms. Tammy Simmons, Ward 10, stated:

Normally I am here griping about one thing or another, but I will be a pleasant change tonight. I came to take a moment to thank the members of the Board that will not be returning at the next Board meeting, which will be when we have our new Aldermen. While I may not have always agreed with you on issues, your service to the City should not go unnoticed. It is a sacrifice. You give up family and personal time. Regardless of everything else, you should be thanked. In particular, I want to thank Mayor Guinta for everything he has done over the past four years. His commitment to making our City government more efficient and accountable, for holding the line on spending and on tax increases, and for working diligently to improve the quality of life of Manchester's residents should be recognized. For me personally, if I could thank you for one thing it would have to be for having the courage and the conviction to stand and fight for the spending cap that passed in November. For all of these things I thank you. I am confident that while you will no longer be at that helm you will not be going away any time soon and there will be plenty more things to be thankful for in the future. I wish each of you and your families a Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

Mr. Glenn Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all. I want to thank all those who are leaving. Thank you for your time. I too have not always agreed with you, but you are elected to do a job and I hope you do it on behalf of the people. On the other hand, we started off 2009 spending \$10,000 a month to keep a bus station

open that we couldn't even buy tickets at. We were the laughing stock of the state of New Hampshire. You spent roughly a quarter of a million dollars on the new terminal that is now open, but promises were not kept. I don't see Greyhound and I don't see Peter Pan. We are supposed to be returning. How do we get to Maine, Vermont, or Nashua? The other two bus companies, Concord Trailways and Boston Express, do not go to Nashua, Portsmouth, or Vermont. Are you trying to make sure we are stuck in Manchester or in New Hampshire? There is something wrong with that. The next administration should think about negotiating to get more buses down here. We have an Amtrak system in Exeter. If you have no other form of transportation other than public, you can't get to it. You should talk about bringing a train station to Manchester. The state of New Hampshire is already over \$38 million in the hole. It said so last week in the newspaper. We're not going to be as deep as they are, but we're hurting in Manchester, too. If you keep spending the way you spent this year on projects that won't last or projects that have to be torn down weeks after you built them or you keep building roads that don't belong to the City without asking permission from the state before you did the harm...if we as citizens did such a thing it would be considered a crime. Please, those of you who are replacing the Aldermen, those who are staying and the new Mayor, consider the people. Studio A last night at MCAM hit the bucket. A 15 year old piece of machinery that we bought and rebuilt because you couldn't afford to buy it new failed. It is \$10,000 to replace it. I'm speaking for myself and not for MCAM. We negotiated in good faith with you five months ago. We did exactly what you asked us to do. We laid off a lot of people. We closed every other week. We did our best and we're the ones who are being punished for it. You did not ask us to take 15%. You asked the other side, but not us. Now, you are demanding it. That's not negotiating. When you commit a budget and you want to renegotiate a contract you must renegotiate it first before you make up your mind. The last thing I want to say is Merry Christmas.

Mr. Rene Fortin, Ward 9, stated:

I thank you for the information that you provided about item G. I would like to share a few concerns the neighbors have regarding the upcoming project. For the record, I want it to be known upfront and I want to be transparent that I am with the folks with the yellow shirts. The issue that we're looking at is a big project. A lot of time has been put into it and we understand this, but it has gotten to the point that it is more than just a neighborhood project. It has turned into a south end project. A lot of other people, as the project develops and other solutions are being proposed, are becoming affected. With that said, after the Planning Board meeting had closed for public session, there were two or three other issues that were introduced by the Board, which the public couldn't participate in because the meeting was closed. With that said, the citizens of the south end would like to be able to work with the incoming Board of Mayor and Aldermen, as well as the Traffic Committee that is going to be looking at this. The Master Plan says that the City wants to be friendly to neighborhoods. We are asking the City to be friendly to our neighborhood. One of the other items that we are looking at is the understanding that this is a big project and we would like to try to motivate it as quickly as possible, but we should take the time needed to be able to touch all bases and look at all aspects so we can openly discuss and talk about what is going to be positive or negative. After all the discussions are complete and a final decision is about to be made, a possible question is if this might not be the right location for this particular project. Mr. Mayor, if I may, if there is anyone in this audience that agrees with what I have just shared with you, would they stand and be recognized and speak up? With that said, thank you and wish each and every one of you a great holiday season. We look forward to being back with yellow shirts next year.

Ms. Jan Sullivan Curtis, 77 Bosse Avenue, stated:

I also want to express my opposition to the plan for the Wal-Mart situation on Gold Street. The fact of the matter is that the idea of closing all avenues except Presidents Avenue is going to have a devastating effect on my neighborhood, particularly Bosse Avenue and Presidents Avenue. They will take a huge beating, traffic-wise. Bosse Avenue is a short street that connects Brown Avenue to South Beech Street and it is already used by many people to avoid the lower portion of South Beech Street. If the Wal-Mart Super Center comes in there, it is going to add a lot of traffic to our neighborhood. It is going to affect my quality of life as well as my property values. I don't believe that we had any time to talk about this at the Planning Board meeting because this particular proposal was brought up at the last minute and the public comment part was closed. I think it is really unfair. I'm glad that it is being postponed to next year. I really appreciate that fact because I think it is going to have an impact that really hasn't been looked at. I appreciate your time and the opportunity to speak.

Ms. Marcia Bellerose, 61 Cottage Road, stated:

I live on Cottage Road. If you don't know where that is, if you go down to the bottom of South Beech Street where it meets Brown Avenue, go straight across to Bow Street and hang a right. That's Cottage Road. I invite any of you to come and try to get out my street at 8:00 AM or try to get in my street at 5:00 PM. It has taken me ten minutes to take a right out of my street before. I have a young daughter who will need to stand at a bus stop and wait for a bus to get to school every day. Right now, the kids in the neighborhood ride their bikes and sell lemonade. We ride our bikes up the hill. We can ride our bikes to Hannaford. That will end because we're at risk of being run over. Right now, when traffic accidents happen on Brown Avenue, Crescent Avenue...if you come all way down Bow Street it is at the end, becomes a speedway. People come down Crescent Road and

come back up Bow Street to skip all the traffic to get on the highway. The other thing is that we're a neighborhood right off the highway. Once people who come to Wal-Mart who commit crimes figure that out we're the perfect neighborhood to commit a crime, get on the highway and be on Route 3 or 293 and be gone in seconds. It puts my neighborhood and the children in my neighborhood at risk. This wasn't given a lot of consideration. In Friday's newspaper, a member of the Planning Board, Mr. DeMato, said he didn't want to put all the traffic on one road, but leave all the roads open to spread the burden. Basically, you are going to put a burden on our neighborhood. Drive around the state. Do you see a Wal-Mart in a neighborhood? It shouldn't be a burden. Wal-Mart isn't a burden where it is now. If you ask the people down there they don't mind the Wal-Mart there. They aren't in a residential neighborhood. You are talking about thousands of home owners being affected by putting a Wal-Mart there. It is not just traffic, but it changes our life. We can't go and walk around and walk up South Beech Street so my daughter can see her friends. Think of all the children who live on Beech Hill. That is going to be another cut through. This really hasn't been given a lot of consideration. I'd like to ask you to stop and think about our quality of life where we live and the effect that it will have on us. If you are going to be on the Aldermanic Board next year it is really important. This isn't a small issue. For us in the south end it is a huge issue.

Mr. Howard McCarthy, 105 Randall Street, stated:

I want to thank you very much for being so generous to give me three minutes to speak. I have some ideas that I think you should be interested in. Of course, I only have three minutes to tell you so I'm not going to tell you, but I'll tell you that I have ideas. The first thing I wanted to talk about is the great Union Leader that is trying to demolish my television show. That hurts me because I have fun doing it. I hope you are watching occasionally. Even though I can't sing, I like to sing and I'm going to sing. It seems to me that it is a small matter of \$50,000 that you

people don't want to give to MCAM. That's not a lot of money. Why can't 50 people here like myself, even though I don't have a lot of money, donate \$1,000? How about 49 other people? How about all the people here who are getting \$100,000 a year? MCAM is the democracy channel. When you get up here and do your thing it irks a lot of people, but it gives us a chance to rebut you. You can't take a channel like that away. If you are going to take away something, why not Channel 16? Why do the teachers get special treatment? I watched Channel 16 this morning and it is the most boring television I have ever seen. By the way, Channel 22 is no better. It is very boring in the morning. This is the only show that people watch. Do you know how to cure this low voter turn out? Does anyone have any ideas at all? I do. For all the registered voters who do not vote we're going to fine them \$10. It won't fly? Try it. Something has to be done. You have to come up with something. Apathy is rampant. Let's do something about it. Do you really have any ideas? I know how to bring money into this City. I'm not going to tell you. I only have three minutes. Would you like to know how to attract 2,000 to 3,000 people? I know. This City made a mistake a long time ago and I can rectify it because it is something...you people don't know how to have fun. This is not a fun place. Everything is so serious here. It is unbelievable. I love fun. Give me a shot and watch my show. I have some good stuff coming up this week.

Mr. Craig Finefrock, 45 Fox Street, stated:

Fox Street is one street above President Road. I'm a long time resident of Manchester, born and raised on the south end of town. I've seen all of the development on South Willow Street along the way. My main concern is Wal-Mart. I'm glad to hear that we are tabling this until the next session. My family and I decided to stay in Manchester and bring up our kids here. We have a lot invested in Manchester on the south end of town. My biggest asset is my house. If I wanted to risk that I would put all my money in the stock market. I know my house, community and neighborhood are always going to be there, but this traffic

really upsets me. I can't image that we can increase traffic on South Willow Street any more than there is today. I travel that every day to get to work and it is a burden and time consuming task. I did a little research and looked at the mission statement that the Planning Department has. I've gone through the Manchester Master Plan draft and they have a common theme. They want to achieve safe and livable neighborhoods. Neighborhoods are the backbone of this City. I hope that when the time comes for the final vote on this we think about Gold Street, President Road, Sewall Street and the south end of Manchester and keep everyone in consideration while we vote on this matter.

Ms. Jeanine Finefrock, 45 Fox Street, stated:

I share many of the same concerns as my fellow area neighbors regarding the impact Wal-Mart will have to my neighborhood. Obviously, my main concern is preserving and protecting my asset, my home, and the quality of life in my neighborhood. This is so much bigger than that. The location of the proposed sight, its close proximity to the neighborhood, South Willow Street, Interstate 293, along with reportedly adding nearly 3,500 cars a day and 4,325 cars on Saturday would warrant anyone to responsibly and reasonably ask how this ever got to the point we are at now. In reviewing prior newspaper articles on this controversy, a few figures were quite alarming and provide a more accurate picture o the actual impact. There will be 6,980 new vehicle trips a day and 8,650 on weekends. These figures account for two trips, one to Wal-Mart and one from Wal-Mart. Anyone familiar with the area knows the daily traffic challenges that currently exist. You are asking and expecting this area to absorb a substantial additional increase in traffic. With all due respect, I fail to see how this is in the best interest of the businesses, neighborhoods and general public driving on these roads. The Planning Board has said that South Willow Street was a mess from Queen City Avenue to the mall. They have received complaints of too many traffic lights and drives off the main street. It also appears that the City and the State cannot

communicate and coordinate with each other to synchronize the traffic lights to somewhat ease the current flow of traffic on the road. Again, I will ask, having this knowledge and information, how did this Board and the Planning Board allow the proposal to get to this point? Wal-Mart has proposed to make improvements to two key intersections by installing a traffic light at South Beech Street and Brown Avenue and building two left hand turn lanes on South Willow Street and John Devine Road. Knowing the area, it is hard to envision any of these as improvements. They may be band aids, but even that is a stretch with the current conditions, let alone the additional impact this proposal will bring to the area. The offsite work that Wal-Mart is being required to do as part of their proposal approval is enticing. If this works, it is something that the City of Manchester would not have to do or pay for. If the closure of Brown Avenue, Sewall, Gold and Bradley Streets are approved after all of the Wal-Mart improvements, what criteria will be used to determine if a gate is warranted for closure within the first year opening? The impact of this vote is far reaching and beyond what anyone can envision today. There is too much at stake to prematurely fast track a decision to push this proposal through.

Ms. Mary Gamage, Hannaford Brothers, stated:

We operate a store on John Devine Drive in Manchester. I'm here to object to the road closures that the Planning Board has recommended to the Board of Aldermen. We view this as being very detrimental to the business that we have made a great investment in on John Devine Drive. We ask that the Board of Aldermen not support this Planning Board recommendation.

Mayor Guinta stated as a reminder for some of the people who came in late who are here regarding item G, the Wal-Mart matter, just so everyone is aware, will be referred to the Public Safety and Traffic Committee, which will take this matter up

either in January or February. Keep an eye out for postings for that Committee for ongoing conversations and input from the residents of that neighborhood.

*There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of **Alderman M. Roy**, duly seconded by **Alderman Pinard**, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further receive and file any written documentation presented.*

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman J. Roy**, duly seconded by **Alderman Smith**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk