

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

September 21, 2010

7:00 PM

Mayor Gatsas called the meeting to order.

Mayor Gatsas called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Alderman Corriveau stated I'm honored to introduce three fine students from a great school, Weston Elementary School, who are also Ward 6 residents. Would Rylee, Ashlynn and Taryn Ducharme all come up for the Pledge of Allegiance?

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Craig, Ludwig, Long, Roy, Osborne, Corriveau, O'Neil,
Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Shaw, Greazzo, Ouellette, Arnold

Mayor Gatsas 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; any resident wishing to speak should come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Mr. Howard McCarthy, 52 Valentine Drive, stated:

It seems like just a couple of weeks ago that I was here. I was wondering if I spoke to you people every two weeks, Your Honor, for three minutes, it would come to a little over an hour in a year. You wouldn't want to do it now, would you? I was at Glendi Saturday night. I got there at 4:30 and at 5:30 I was eating. There were a lot of people there. Also, I was over there today for what I am about to tell you. I have to read this because I want to make sure that I get everything in. Thank you for allowing me to say a few words about the eliminating of one of the two senior lunches that has taken place. I didn't know if after I got through speaking to you people would want to vote on that, but that is my ignorance. It has taken place in Manchester since Bob Shaw's administration up until this year. You made a huge mistake. A number of senior citizens that I talked with are angry and look forward to those events that happen for a couple of simple facts. They have some fun and look forward to getting out and seeing old friends. As for the food, that is a non-issue. It simply goes with the nicety of conversation. For gifts, it is okay, but not high on the totem pole. Don't you see that? When you stop revering the seniors with respect and love, your heart has turned to stone. The amount of money that you thought was extreme in the cost of the luncheons was a very small amount. From people who know that it is practically nothing, I have some good news for you. I have done some research and I can tell you now that I can reduce the cost by about \$10,000 for the luncheon. I was thinking of changing it over to St. George's Church. A different caterer would be okay and a different disc jockey would be okay. Paying \$500 for a disc jockey, Your Honor, is ridiculous. I could do it myself. I have a friend who could do it. He is a great entertainer. This is the Queen City. Why don't we stop crying and put a smile on our face? I'll see you tomorrow. I'll be doing my television show 11:00 to 12:00.

Mr. Glenn Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

This is the second issue of the Queen City Examiner. The third one is due out on October 18th. I want to thank the Alderman in Ward 1, Alderman Craig, for doing the right thing last week when there was a Zoning and Planning Board meeting having to do with an issue in Ward 1. She listened to her constituents and pulled out that letter. She did the right thing. It is not that people in this City are against mental health. That has nothing to do with it. It is the zoning. Why do we have zoning? For a reason. We have given out too many waivers and sometimes it really affects the City or the neighborhood. Too many times in the past few years the Board of Mayor and Aldermen has not been listening to the public. Look what happened in Ward 9 and Ward 6. Those were two big issues about property waivers where they should not have had the waivers because the population that lives in those neighborhoods was there first and were long time taxpayers and you shut them out. That is not listening to our tax base. Talk about our tax base...we still don't follow contracts in this City. What is this thing about this City not wanting to fulfill a contract? If I have a contract with you people you are going to make sure that I fulfill it or I am going to pay the penalty. Why are you people different? If you signed a contract you signed a contract. Now we know why the City gets sued and loses. It doesn't follow its own rules. You cannot suspend Ordinances and laws to suit yourself and say that it is done in the best interest of the public. It doesn't fly anymore, not when it is costing taxpayers lots of money and then six months down the road we need to tear down that project and put it back the way it was. Sometimes patching doesn't work, not when you have patched the last ten years. A check was received by the City last week for over \$12,000 from the MCAM Board. Let me make this perfectly clear, there is a reason why it took this long for it to happen. It is because you guys voted last May and did not fulfill that commitment. You still have not fulfilled that commitment to the point that the City may end up being evicted from that building. What is the problem? You made a commitment as a Board and the

majority rules. Why can't this City follow through? The last thing that I want to say is that there is a lot of stuff in the old MCAM building that belongs to private people and they have been forbidden for months to go out and claim their property. If this doesn't happen soon and you don't follow the rules that you agreed upon last May, there will be a cop going to people's houses and this will end up in the courts because that is the way it has to be done. That's what you would do if your property was being taken away from you. Why don't we fix this appropriately?

Mr. Matt Rosenberg, 197 Cedar Street, stated:

I suffer from a condition that could only be described as Aldermanic depression. Two weeks ago I came here and spoke with you folks about a property at 189 and 193 Cedar Street, a property which the City has deemed uninhabitable, but the City does not seem to want to take responsibility for vacating or helping to find suitable, safe or clean housing for the inhabitants. This is a building that is still decorated on the outside with empty beer cans and garbage and on the inside by human feces and other filth. After speaking to you I thought that I had garnered a certain level of sympathy among my listenership. I heard things like we are going to talk to the police, get it vacated for the good of the community and the building is going to be boarded up. Last week I was even happier to get a phone call after no less than five unanswered voicemails from Officer Maloney of the Community Policing Department saying that he was going to solve the problems and would call me the next day. I'm still waiting for his phone call. Very little has changed in the two weeks since I have spoken to you other than the property has become more disgusting and I have become more frustrated. My tenant complains about the smell next door and the only thing I can tell her is that I am working on it. I have spoken to the Mayor, I've spoken to my alderman, I've spoken to the Fire Department, I've spoken to the Health Department, I've spoken to the Building Department, Officer Maloney, Sergeant Fuller, and I tried to speak to Chief Mara,

but could not get past his secretary. All I ask of you folks...I've spoken to everybody that I can think of. If you can name someone else that I can speak to I'm still looking for the person or that governing body which is responsible for upholding the laws, the regulations and the standards of this City.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Lopez, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

Mayor Gatsas stated since we have some additional time, I have a presentation on our full agenda which could be handled now. Could I have Donna Gamache, Moe Nault, Peter Kendall, Dick Laliberte, Chuck Gordon and Ron Fornier come forward? These are the folks who some of you may recognize and some of you may not. They are all part of a pretty big contingency that ran Cruisin' Downtown Manchester about three weeks ago. I can tell you that they had over 800 cars in the exhibition. We closed Elm Street from Bridge Street to Lake Avenue. I think that on that Saturday there were probably at least 30,000 people who were walking Elm Street and looking at the cars. I can tell you that it was a pretty spectacular sight. I know that there is another one, and my understanding is, at Lake George it was a little bit bigger than ours this year, but I think that they are going to attempt to make ours a lot bigger next year. It is going to be the Saturday of Labor Day. The discussions have started, but I think that the one thing that we as a community really didn't do was hyper advertising about it. You really didn't see it anywhere. There was very little discussion about it and I can tell you that next year we need to all participate and get this thing to a different level than what it was this year. I certainly thank them for all the people who they brought downtown and I have a resolution.

The City of Manchester, Resolution: Be it known that the Office of the Mayor extends its sincere gratitude to Cruisin' Downtown in recognition of

bringing a first class, annual event to Elm Street that benefits the culture of the City and our downtown economy. Be it further known that the Office of the Mayor extends its best wishes for continued success and that this Resolution is duly signed by the Mayor of Manchester, Theodore Gatsas.

Mayor Gatsas stated I appreciate it and I thank every one of you. There is a plaque here that says tenth annual Cruisin' Downtown 2010, Manchester, New Hampshire, September 4, 2010, special thanks to the City of Manchester.

7. Presentation by Jay Minkarah, Peter Ramsey and Susan Strickler on the impacts of Art & Culture in Manchester, if time permits.

Mr. Peter Ramsey, Palace Theater Director, stated I'm very proud to be here with you. I'm joined with Jay Minkarah and Susan Strickler who is the director of the very famous Currier Museum. We're all glad to be here. We have very, very good news for you. To start off I'll hand it off to Jay who will go through the presentation for you.

Mr. Jay Minkarah, Economic Development Director, stated as you may recall, we received \$10,000 C-Tap grant earlier in the year, which the Board graciously accepted so that we could do a study on the impacts that art and cultural institutions have on our City. At the time we did that because we really had a sense in seeing what was going on in the City that there really was something here. We suspected that the activity really did have a significant impact. The study has been concluded. We hired a consulting firm to help us with that. I put out a caveat that we focused primarily on those institutions and organizations that tend to have a larger draw, the bigger ones in the City, but there are many more out there, as well as smaller, private businesses that we were not able to capture the impacts of, but for the institutions we did we really were struck with the findings.

We would like to run through those this evening. We're not looking for any type of endorsement or approval or really any other further actions, we just felt that there was something here, a story worth telling. It focused on a few key areas which you are going to see. I would like to turn it over to Susan Strickler to run through some of the highlights of the study.

Ms. Susan Strickler, Director of the Currier Museum of Art, stated I'm delighted to be here and want to thank you very much for giving us a few minutes to talk about this. As you can see from the slide up there, we have a wide array and a strong concentration of very diverse cultural attractions, from large to small, but the point that I really want to focus on is that there are over 175,000 visitors each year to these cultural attracts, these museums and historical attractions and those employ about 140 full time and part time workers. In direct annual spending that is about \$9 million. In the study we did not do a multiplier factor which would have included indirect spending so this is really based on what the organization's direct spending is in the community. We also have a very strong concentration of performing arts groups, both theater and music and the centerpiece of that is the Palace Theater. You will see on the slide above that there are many smaller and very vibrant musical and theatrical groups as well. These performing arts groups employ about 24 full time and 250 part time works with direct spending in the community of about \$3.5 million. I would like, since we are here, to have Peter Ramsey talk a little bit about the Palace Theater and its attendance.

Mr. Ramsey stated we're proud to report, and I told this to many of you directly, that the University of Southern New Hampshire last year delivered an economic impact study of the Palace Theater. They had a class study for about nine months and they came back with direct findings of about 130,000 visitors coming to the Palace downtown with direct economic impact of around \$4 million a year. We put that in this study as you'll see.

Ms. Strickler stated one of the nice things about this City is that we do have a great range in size of venues which allows us to bring different kinds of productions here to the City. Obviously one of those big ones, the biggest, is the Verizon Wireless Arena, which draws about 770,000 visitors here and has \$31 million in direct spending and significant jobs through direct and indirect output. This is from 2004. We estimate that about 50% of the attendance, which is about 385,000 or \$15 million in direct spending, are through non-sports, what I call non-monster truck type of events, that are at the Verizon Wireless, but are culturally related events. We're also very lucky to have some creative education institutions in the City. Perhaps the centerpiece is the New Hampshire Institute of Art. I have to say we all know when classes are in session because we see the students downtown and the restaurants and businesses downtown certainly know that. Their payroll is \$5 million out of a total annual expenditure of \$10.4 million with a sizeable number of part time and full time employees of 103. Also, one of the anchors in the north end is the Manchester Community Music School, which spends about \$1 million. I think also that I would like to add that the Currier Art Center enrolls about 1,700 students and awards tuition scholarships of about \$8,500.

*The time being 7:30 P.M., on motion of **Alderman DeVries**, duly seconded by **Alderman Shea**, it was voted to recess Public Participation at the Special Meeting of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.*

*On motion of **Alderman Arnold**, duly seconded by **Alderman Roy**, it was voted to recess the Special Meeting of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to continue with the presentation.*

Mayor Gatsas called the meeting back to order.

Ms. Strickler stated I would like to talk now about an area that perhaps doesn't get as much attention and that is the investment that cultural organizations make in the City of Manchester and I'd like to use two examples in particular, one being the Currier Museum of Art. I think many of you know that we underwent, in 2007 and 2008, a \$21.4 million expansion and the New Hampshire Institute of Art has been expanding periodically over the past few years with a total of about \$18 million invested in their facility. I'd like to say that in terms of the Currier, about \$17.5 million of our expansion went into New Hampshire businesses, contractors, and vendors, with many of them in the greater Manchester area. I know that a similar ratio is true of the New Hampshire Institute of Art. All you have to do is drive by and see the contractors who are involved with these projects. I think that is an important aspect. Of course the Verizon Wireless is a huge investment in the City of Manchester. If we look at some of the overall economic impact and importance to the City there are over 600,000 visitors who come to cultural attractions, performances and cultural events at the Verizon Wireless Arena and this is about \$24 million in direct spending, in this case not including the Verizon Wireless Arena and a sizeable number of full time and part time jobs as well. Again, one point that I would like to add, which is not on a slide, is the synergy that cultural organizations share with the hospitality and restaurant businesses here in Manchester. I would like to mention briefly that the proprietors of Richard's Bistro, the Republic Café, Z, and Ignite can all describe to you tangible ways performances, special exhibitions, students and their families all drive business to them. There have been many studies done that a strong, vibrant arts and cultural community can give a strong competitive edge to a city like Manchester and its competitors that may be seeking conventions and bringing them into their community. Certainly conventions are an important part of the economic sector. I would just like to conclude by saying that certainly there is a significant combined impact of the employment, capital investment, and visitation and direct spending

from arts and cultural organizations, making them one of the most important factors in the community. I think as we all go out and talk about the City, whether we are interested in bringing businesses to this community that are contemplating moving here, or talking to our own residents about the fact that Manchester, not Portsmouth or Concord, has the largest concentration of arts and cultural assets of any city in northern New England. It is important for us to begin to talk about Manchester and to use that when we are talking to various kinds of constituents. Having said that, I'm going to turn it over to Peter who is going to talk a little bit about the next slide.

Mr. Ramsey stated if I can just repeat what she just said. I think it is remarkable statement, and something that I did not know, that Manchester, New Hampshire, the city we all love, is the number one location, north of Boston, for arts and culture. That is something to brag about. Can you image, over the last century, Manchester without some of these great institutions? Since 1898, Manchester without the New Hampshire Institute of Art? Since 1914, the Palace Theater? Since 1929, without the Currier? It is these institutions and many smaller ones that help define Manchester as a great place to live. If I can say for the record that Jay deserves the credit for this study. He and his office were not asked by us. They came to us and asked us to help them. It is a remarkable thing to be proud of.

Mr. Minkarah stated just to conclude, there were a few things that came out that were striking. Obviously, appreciating the importance of Manchester to arts and culture in this region was pretty striking. Just to recap on the economic impact that it has, that was also striking. These institutions collectively and the non-profit arts and cultural institutions would be the eighth largest employer in Manchester if you aggregated them. That is pretty significant. What we did find also is that we do have some challenges. The importance of Manchester as an arts and cultural

center is generally not recognized. We have a very weak brand identity in that sense, not only outside of the City, but inside the City itself. We don't have a particularly strong relationship with the business community and there is really little or no organized activity between these organizations to help them capitalize on the number of people that they are bringing to the City. Those are our goals going forward. We would like to make Manchester an arts and cultural destination as a part of our overall economic development strategy as a part of our overall marketing for the City. We are also looking to build stronger relationships with the business community and increase collaboration between these organizations so that as we are bringing the 600,000 people to Manchester, we are capitalizing on that in every way that we possibly can. Thank you for your attention and we will hopefully be coming back to you and sharing some results with you in the future.

Alderman Long stated I don't need to be convinced of Manchester's art and culture. What I would like to know...everywhere I go with respect to states and municipalities increasing their density and their market share and tax base a lot of it is surrounding arts and culture. Is there an avenue right now promoting that in this City? Is there a consortium right now that is promoting it? Jay, I heard what you planned on doing, but is there currently a venue with which to do that and how far does it reach?

Mr. Minkarah replied there really is not and that is one of the things that we found. We realized how much we have and that we really have not been promoting that actively. There is no organization or mechanism, so that is really one of our number one goals coming out of this, that we need to create that and those collaborations between these organizations and we need to integrate this message as a part of a marketing strategy for the City. Going forward, that is exactly what we want to start to make happen because it should be happening.

Alderman Long stated in this economy it is a no brainer for arts and culture. Everywhere you go where there is a little bit of that they are making ends meet just by the arts and culture. Seeing all that Manchester has to offer and studies showing that north of Boston we are the arts and culture city we are missing the boat. I would certainly be happy to hear more as to what the City's role could be in promoting this and making it happen.

Ms. Strickler stated I think the first thing we would like to ask is that when you speak about the City, you speak about the cultural assets, the organizations that are the assets to the City. As we think about promoting the City going forward in all kinds of ways, such as materials reaching out to businesses that are possibly thinking of coming here, we ought to include something about arts and culture. I think it is the job of the arts and cultural organizations and Peter and I are going to be working with other CEOs of those organizations to come together and try to put forth a plan that we can work with on strengthening that and giving it greater visibility. We feel it is very important. As you talk to people in the State, one of the things that has happened in Manchester that has been tremendous to us is the burst of restaurants in downtown Manchester. When I first came to this City 15 years ago and I went over to Portsmouth, the feel about Manchester was that there was no place to eat and there was nothing to do. Why do people go to Portsmouth, Portland, Providence, or Boston? It is because there are several things to do. There are places to eat, there is retail and there is arts and culture. Cultural visitors are known to stay longer and spend more money so it is a great boom to the City to be able to show pride in the arts and culture, the architecture and the history and heritage of the City. I come from outside the City and when I came here I was totally enthralled with the Manchester mills and the history behind it and the architecture that is still here. I think there are beginning steps that are fairly simple for all of us who feel that this is a real asset and I am delighted to have your comment.

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

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk