

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

October 19, 2010

7:00 PM

Mayor Gatsas called the meeting to order.

Mayor Gatsas called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Colin McHugh, Patrick McDonald and Jennifer McDonald from Smyth Road Elementary School. They were introduced by Aldermen Craig and Ludwig.

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.

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

Good evening. I want to thank the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. You guys did a terrific job in working together as an elected board with the Chili Cook Off. That was superb for our City and we need a lot more events like that. It is a true representation of what is good about this City. Your Honor, I know you had a lot to do with this and I congratulate you as well. It was a lot of hard work and you guys pulled it together and it was very successful. Thank you again. You have in front of you the third issue of the *Queen City Examiner*. Tonight I want to talk about property. There is a property in Ward 7 that is called the old Genest Bakery. Some of you might know where it is. It had a lot of violations. It collects about \$16,279 in taxes but if you took the whole neighborhood, all of the buildings that surround that block...they are in the middle of the block but if you took the four sides of that block it is over \$160,000 collected in taxes. It is fair to say that we need to treat everybody alike. If the apartment buildings in a residential area must maintain the codes so should the industrial area that surrounds them. The graffiti is atrocious. The garbage is horrible. Not too long ago the Fire Department had to go there because there was some leaky acid from a battery from a vehicle that is not registered and has been there abandoned for years. This is a building where people are working doing all kinds of stuff so I don't understand how they can remain in violation. I hope someone takes care of that problem. The neighborhood is very concerned and I know the Alderman of that ward has been approached about it and he is very concerned. I am not blaming anyone. I am just saying that that is another thing we need to look into. In this City we seem to be able to enforce the law to condemn a building if it is condemned but we can't keep people out of those buildings. I don't understand. If a building is condemned how can gangs and criminals be allowed in there to take over those neighborhoods? That will help us with the crime. The last thing I want to talk about is Veteran's Park. Please do not shortchange the people anymore. No more cutting of the trees unless you replace them and no more giving away part of that park. That is a

central park downtown where we do everything as a community and it is our major memorial park. Thank you.

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

Mayor Gatsas stated we have a few presentations. Why don't we have the presentation by Peter Kelleher of Harbor Homes and then if we still have some time there are a couple of other things.

7. Presentation by Peter Kelleher, Harbor Homes President and CEO, on the Harbor Homes' Somerville Street project, if time permits.

Mr. Peter Kelleher, President and CEO of Harbor Homes, stated good evening Mayor Gatsas and members of the Board of Aldermen. I want to first say that I am very honored to be here tonight to have a chance to briefly tell you about our project for homeless veterans on Somerville Street. I want to express my gratitude and appreciation to the Board of Aldermen and the City for the warm welcome that it has provided for this project and for the funding to help it go forward. Aldermen Lopez, Shea and O'Neil have all stepped up and really tried to help us understand how this project can best go forward in the City. We are also very grateful for that. With me here tonight is Mary Morin from the Veterans Service Council and Representative Garrity from the Veterans Homeless Study Committee in the Legislature. They may have some comments after I conclude. New Hampshire has a presence of homeless veterans. We have about 428 homeless veterans according to the last count. Some estimates top 600. Harbor Homes is an agency that has been primarily in Nashua. We just completed our second major project for homeless veterans. We work primarily with the Department of Veteran

Affairs who provide initial capital and some operating dollars after the program begins to operate. In Manchester there is capacity now for about nine homeless veterans, all male. With the State having the largest deployment in its history now, there is an expectation that a significant percentage may return and at some point need services like this. There are many issues associated with veteran homelessness that I am sure all of you have an awareness of from PTSD to substance abuse and alcoholism. A lot of you may have heard about the recent efforts by the Federal Department of Veteran Affairs to announce a five year plan to end homelessness across the nation. Here in NH we spent the last six months trying to collaborate and assist in developing an even more aggressive plan; a four year plan. We feel that the number of homeless veterans is finite and we ought to be able to do something about it in a shorter period of time. On this slide you see some links to additional information if you want to look at what the plan is. The project that we are speaking to you here about tonight is pursuant to and incorporated into that plan so it is in lockstep with the overall efforts statewide. This slide depicts an illustration from our talented architect George Hickey. It is the vision that we hope will happen on Somerville Street. Here is a little more of the elevations and drawings and site plan with some interior layouts. There is one last elevation and then some details. The two projects that we have developed thus far have both been projects that were about \$5 million to develop. We are expecting that this project will be about the same. Initial funding for the property, as I said, comes from the federal government from the VA capital grant that has been awarded to Harbor Homes for this purpose. We also have commitments from the Housing Finance Authority and congressional earmarks and funding that we are grateful for from the City of Manchester. Then we have other funding that is kind of in the pending category. We recently applied for a grant and financing from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston. That same source financed the other two veteran projects that we have. It is a very competitive funding process but we are keeping our fingers crossed and hoping that it will happen again for the

project here in Manchester. The project is going to need to do some fundraising, probably in the area of about \$150,000. Our costs that we are projecting for the project are just under \$5 million and this is sort of how it breaks down. We are still in the pre-development phase trying to raise the additional funds. We don't own the property as of this time. We have the option to purchase the property. We will complete this process and take site control and then demolish the existing structure on the site and begin construction. This sort of outlines hopefully before the end of the calendar year 2011 an opening of the facility. We have some hurdles still remaining. There are additional environmental tests that we must complete on the site per the requirement of New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. We have some additional funding that we are still trying to secure as you have just seen. We are scheduled in the third week of November to go before the Planning Board here in Manchester to seek approval for the project. I would be happy to provide any additional information. Again, we are very grateful and if there is anything I can answer I would be more than happy to do so.

Alderman Shea stated as the Alderman in Ward 7 I want to compliment Harbor Homes for selecting 335 Somerville Street. To give some of the Aldermen who are not aware of this some information, we did run into a problem a few years back when a halfway house was going to be built there and that was opposed by the people in the neighborhood. This particular project has the complete support of the neighborhood. I want to list a few positive aspects of this.

All of the neighbors have agreed that this is a worthwhile project to go into this particular area. It will, in my judgment and in the judgment of the neighbors, rejuvenate that particular area of the City. It will add a lot of different amenities to that part of the City. Also it is a very sound project to assist veterans who have given so much of their life and their time in support of our country and is a positive element in Manchester simply because we do not have the amount of help

that is needed for the veterans. Again, as the Alderman of that ward you have my complete and total support. I thank you very much for taking the interest in Manchester and I wish you the most positive success that can be achieved.

Alderman DeVries stated it looks like a great project. I have a couple of quick questions for you. The apartments that you will be building out, are a certain percentage of them handicap accessible or all of them?

Mr. Kelleher responded we try to think about the City being prepared for all eventualities. We don't really know what lies in the future and where this country may ask people to go and put themselves in harms way and in what condition they may come back. We designed our original facility so that a number of them are complete handicapped accessible in the beginning. I think we had four or five in our first building but all of the rest are designed so that should they need to become more handicapped accessible we are prepared to be able to make that adjustment going forward. What we are finding is a lot of the people we are serving do have disabilities and physical challenges with access.

Alderman DeVries asked so they will have the wider wheelchair accessible dimensions but maybe not be handicapped accessible on day one except for a few? It's a perfect plan, at least I believe. The contingency set aside looks like it might be low . Is that because you have built this kind of design before and you played this out and you feel very comfortable with your construction numbers?

Mr. Kelleher responded the reserves are percentage requirements that are regulatory requirements. We are stuck with those.

Alderman Lopez asked regarding the environmental issue, what stages is that in and when do you anticipate clearance of that?

Mr. Kelleher replied there has been some previous site mitigation where identified soil was found to have coal ash on the site and that was removed previously. We went back and did some additional tests, and for the most part those tests came back okay. There were a couple of tests that did not, so we went back to DES. We are now doing an updated site assessment. That work is underway now. We have contracted out for it and the results should be available to us within the next 30 to 45 days.

Alderman Lopez stated the only other comment I would like to make is some of the Aldermen have been down to Harbor Homes in Nashua, and the rest of the Aldermen, I am sure if you ever want to take a trip you can contact Mr. Kelleher and visit because the Aldermen who went down, along with some staff, were very impressed with the operation that serves the veterans one hundred percent. I compliment you on your operation.

Mr. Kelleher stated we would certainly welcome any visits. This Thursday there is going to be a stand down at Harbor Homes at 45 High Street for veterans so please join us.

Alderman DeVries asked when is that going to be?

Mr. Kelleher answered Thursday at 10:00 AM at 45 High Street.

Alderman DeVries asked and what is it?

Mr. Kelleher replied a veteran stand down is an effort for one day to bring veterans together and connect them with whatever it is they might need, particularly homeless veterans. It has been going on for about 15 years. In fact

one of the links I listed was on *60 Minutes* this week, if you had a chance to see that segment.

Mayor Gatsas stated let me just tell you that I applaud you for your efforts because I did watch that segment and I also watched another documentary that they were doing in another part of the country where they had 900 homeless veterans looking for 60 spots. I can tell you that it certainly was something that when you saw it you couldn't believe that these men and women, after going out and protecting this country for the freedoms that we all love, were walking around and it was a procession leaving the site that they were at with their grocery carts and their belongings on their back looking for the next place they were going to stay. It was a pretty sad thing to see. I will tell you to watch the *60 Minutes* because that one was pretty extraordinary too. I applaud you and hopefully this is the first of many that we can do in Manchester to open up doors and try to end the homelessness not only for veterans but for everybody else. Thank you very much.

Alderman Long stated thank you for coming to Manchester with this initiative. The sources of funding pending, do you know when the status won't be pending any longer?

Mr. Kelleher replied by the end of December we will be notified about the decision from the Federal Home Loan Bank.

Alderman Long asked do you feel confident?

Mr. Kelleher answered I am confident that we did our very best to submit the highest quality grant application possible for the site. There are 54 applicants that we are up against.

Alderman Shea stated I also want to mention Pat Garrity who is in the Legislature from Ward 7 who has been working very closely with Harbor Homes. I am not sure where Ms. Morin is from but Pat is from my ward.

Mayor Gatsas stated I have two more presentations and I will try to get one in here before 7:30 and we will do the next one right after that. Chief Mara, please come up. Sometimes we have employees and department heads that do an awful lot of things that we don't really understand or recognize. It is appropriate that this award would be here this evening right after the presentation we just had because it is important. Chief, I am giving you a Resolution:

City of Manchester, New Hampshire, Resolution:

Be it known that the Office of the Mayor extends its congratulations to Chief David Mara in recognition of receiving the Patriot Award from the Department of Defense for extraordinary support of employees who serve in the NH National Guard and Reserve.

Duly signed by the Mayor of Manchester, Theodore L. Gatsas;
attested to by City Clerk, Matthew Normand; presented on
October 19, 2010.

Mayor Gatsas stated when you are out there protecting and helping the employees of this great City it is something that as a department head you should certainly be very proud of. It is certainly something that I am very proud that you are doing for us in the City. Thank you.

Mr. David Mara, Chief of Police, stated thank you Mayor. I can't tell you how proud I am of the men we have who serve our country. Right now we have two. One is overseas in a combat area in Afghanistan. We have had several that have gone there and seen combat and we had several others who performed other roles.

We are very proud to have them as part of our Police Department and I believe they make us a lot stronger as a police department.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Corriveau** it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk