

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE CIVIC CENTER

August 31, 1998

6:30 PM

Chairman Wihby called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Rivard, Cashin, Hirschmann, O'Neil

Chairman Wihby stated before we start, Alderman Rivard who represents this ward would like to say a few words.

Alderman Rivard stated thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, I'd like to welcome you all here to Ward 8 this evening. For those of you who do not know me I'm Bob Rivard, I'm the Alderman in Ward 8 for at least another year-and-a-half and I want to thank the Chairman, Dave Wihby, for bringing this public hearing to Memorial High School in Ward 8 this evening and before I sit down I want to recognize the Manchester Development Corporation Chaired by Skip Ashooh, members Dick Charpentier and Ray Pinard. I want to personally thank them for a job well-done. Those folks have gone above and beyond the call of duty and put in a hundred hours of time in putting this program together. So, I want to thank them personally for that. Thank you. And, I want to thank you folks for coming here this evening. The Committee is here this evening to take questions from you folks and we are hoping that you'll ask us about the construction of a civic center in the Downtown Manchester area. We also encourage you to ask any questions you might have regarding this important project for the City of Manchester. We have some very capable people on the committee who are able to answer questions and hopefully provide you with the right answers. The bad news is is that we have about 40 interested individuals who have signed up to speak here this evening and I'm going to ask you to adhere to the five minute time limit that we have given to everybody and I have been selected to be the enforcer of that five minute rule, so I really would ask you to respect the five minutes because otherwise we'll be here till one, two o'clock in the morning. So, once we get started we have a time keeper sanctioned by Bobby Stephens the Boxing Commissioner, we have Paul who has been sanctioned here, he is a licensed timekeeper and when we get the five minute bell we'll ask you to complete your comments and sit down and allow the next individual to speak, so it's nothing personal it's just in the essence of time and once again we thank you for being here and we look forward to your questions.

Chairman Wihby stated thank you, Robert. Alderman Cashin told me a good Chairman is one who delegates, so I delegated the light and the timer to Bob. We have another sign-up sheet, so we have to make sure we have that, so hopefully the Clerk will come in.

Chairman Wihby advised that the main purpose of the meeting is to hear comments from the public regarding the proposed civic center; that a presentation shall be made followed by comments from the public. Each person shall be given one opportunity to speak; comments shall be limited to five minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair. Members of the MDC Civic Center Subcommittee shall be requested to remain during the public comment period to answer questions that may arise as directed by the Chair and we'll start of with Skip.

Mr. Ashooh stated this is the fourth in a series of public hearings that the Special Committee on the Civic Center, the Aldermanic Special Committee has conducted. If you recall there was one last Tuesday night at the Public Library's auditorium followed by one Wednesday night at West High School followed by a live call-in show on Thursday night on Manchester School of Technology Television and this is the fourth and last in this particular series. We think it's been a very good process, I'm going to keep my comments short in respect to all those who have signed up, so we've taken our abbreviated version, abbreviated it even more and we're going to just go through a framework...I think many of you have already heard to some extent what the components are of this study that we've put before the Aldermen and after that I have a few brief comments and then we're going to go right to your questions. So, if we can have the first slide...while we're doing that let me take a couple of minutes to introduce the members of the committee and of the parties involved who have joined us here tonight...and actually if you wouldn't mind standing up when I introduce you. First, the other member of my committee that's here tonight is Dick Charpentier, Dick is a CPA, life-long resident and managing partner, is that a fair statement, of Barry, Dunn, McNeal & Parker in Downtown Manchester. Eric Longbottom is here representing Enron Energy Services, Eric is the General Manger for Enron in this area and has also been a resident of New Hampshire for a long, long time. Barry Brensinger of the firm of Lavallee Brensinger. Barry's firm represents the local component of a national partnership between HOQ Sport and a local firm. When we went to the start of this process the request for proposals for the architectural firms required that a firm of national renown with experience in the field of constructing public assembly facilities would partner with a local firm. HOK Sport...some of you would known HOK Sport is the firm that built Camden Yards which is probably at

the heart of one of the greatest revitalizations of a major metropolitan area is the home for the Baltimore Orioles, they also did the United Center, the home of the Chicago Bulls and we hope that we will also add to their resume the civic center in Downtown Manchester. One of the key components...that RFP was that we had a very limited budget and that budget tied the hands of the architects a great deal and many of the architectural firms came to us and said there isn't enough money in this process to do what you're asking, so we'd like to put off this list of duties and do them later on in the process...Lavallee Brensinger and HOK came to us with tremendous credentials and said there isn't enough money to do the job, but we will spend some of our own money to make sure that everything you've asked for gets done in this phase. They did that because their statement was they believe in the project, they believed in this City. So, we think that commended them to us very, very well. The last gentleman here is a fellow named Richard Murray, Rich is a representative of the Manchester Rivermen, the local ownership group that has stepped forward to put their personal capital on the line to acquire an American Hockey League team that would be the major tenant in the facility as proposed. Many people say well, you're talking about private investment...how much private investment...this may be one of the pieces of private investment that is least recognized because it's requiring that a group of business people get together, make an investment in a business and assume all the risks of that business to become a tenant in what we think is a premier facility; that's not counted in the money that's being contributed by Ogden or by Enron, this is additional money that these people are putting at risk to start a business that has never existed in Manchester before and we're pleased to have them as part of this deal. So, the first slide on this screen is the mission statement of the Manchester Development Corporation. The Manchester Development Corporation is an arm of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, it was established to conduct the business of the Board that is not appropriate or effective for an elected office or elected Board to conduct...in essence we take care of the real estate and the development here in this City. You'll know us obviously by the proposal for the civic center, but we also have and are trying to market and develop the lot at the corner of Bridge and Elm Streets which we think is a real attractive place, we'd love to have someone come in there and if there are any developers in the audience you can see us after the show. But, it is a series of projects in town where we're charged with seeking the highest and best use of the assets of the City of Manchester for all its citizens. Therefore, the Board asked us to conduct a feasibility study to see if a civic center in Downtown Manchester would accomplish the goals of revitalizing a Downtown that hasn't been well since about 1965 and it's been getting better recently and I want to take this opportunity because we've talked about Downtown revitalization a lot...there are people who are already making investments in Downtown and I

think we need to recognize those efforts. Some of you may or may not be aware of an organization Downtown called Intown Manchester...Rich Davis is here tonight...Rich is the Executive Director of Intown Manchester and I think we need to recognize those people who have already done a lot of work...if you've gone up or down Elm Street in the last six months...if you've taken a ride up or down Elm Street over the last six months to a year you've noticed a lot of new storefronts. A lot of storefronts that are bringing back what is I think people would like to remember about Manchester...the charming little shops and the like; that is all part of Intown Manchester's work and those people, I think, are doing this in part because they're anticipating the City of Manchester doing something to bring more business Downtown for them, they've made an investment. We talked a little bit about why the Board asked us to do this and you see four reasons why up on the board, but the bottom line is the residential taxpayer has been bearing the burden of just about everything that takes place in Manchester for the last 25 or 30 years, I used the illustration last time...in 1986 the City budget, the entire City budget was around \$92 million of that the residential taxpayer paid 50 percent, the commercial taxpayer all businesses combined paid 50 percent. In 1997, the last year we have numbers for...the budget had risen to \$147 million, the residential taxpayer portion of that budget had now risen to 60 percent, approximately \$87 million...that \$80 million in round numbers is almost the size of the entire budget of the City of Manchester in 1986; that trend has been increasing...the Aldermen became alarmed about it, they decided to seek a way to improve or raise the level of the tax base in Downtown Manchester and spread the burden of the increased services that the City asked for, the repairs that have to be done, the investment in the future that I think we all come to expect from a town that is vibrant and growing. So, what do we have to do in our feasibility study. We had to see if these four elements were possible, we had to select a project team. Now, I've introduced members of that project team...missing tonight are members from Ogden Entertainment...they have a number of buildings in New England...Harold Bannon who is their Operations Vice President is at one of those buildings tonight. Frank Rousseau who is a Vice President and has been our contact here, I believe is in South Africa tonight. They manage properties all over the world, the largest of which is the Sydney Stadium which seats, I think 130,000 people. We would not be the smallest, but we certainly we would something that is very attractive to them. They have decided to make a major capital contribution to our building because they see the potential here. We have to secure a hockey franchise. I've introduced Mr. Murray and his group...they are well into that process at this point and we have to structure financing. Stephen Stern who has been a fixture at some of these hearings is tonight on his way down to the Bi-Low Center. If you take a look in the final report you'll see that there are three or four public facilities that

have been constructed over the last few years that were examples to measure our project against the Bi-Low Center opens tomorrow night, Mr. Stern structured the financing on that facility, that facility opens tomorrow night, he is there for that opening. It is interesting to note that the Bi-Low Center is in an area where the demographics demonstrate a population that is more blue collar than New Hampshire and they have at least 30 luxury suites and about 800 club seats... what's interesting about it is they sold out the luxury suites and increased the number of club seats twice before the building was open, they completed the sale, they sold out all the luxury suites and club seats in the spring time and that is revenue to the building, it comes from the corporations that choose to use your building as a place for them to entertain their clients and do business in your Downtown, it doesn't happen now. The guidelines that the Aldermen gave us were very, very clear. Absolutely no property taxes, significant private investment, protection against operating losses, the credit...that's the bond that we issued has to be qualified for bond insurance, we have to secure a professional hockey league franchise with local ownership...there was one piece in there that I think people really want to pay attention to...two pieces actually. We can't use property taxes in this construction project either to fund construction or to pay for any of the operations of the building, therefore, we've done two things. We've proposed that you use an increment of the Rooms & Meals Tax to pay for the City's portion of the bonds and that the building manager would guarantee the City against any losses from the operation of that building, so that during construction and during the life of the building that there would be no losses that would come back to the taxpayer; that was a request that was made by the Aldermen...without those two things in place we would not have presented a recommendation to go forward with this project. The civic center that we are talking about as proposed would be about ten to thirteen thousand seats depending upon the event. Approximately 10,000 seats for hockey up to 13,000 seats for a concert depending on how you situate the stage in that building. The building itself would be one and a half to two stores tall depending on how low you could sink the seating bowl into the ground and we've talked about a number of different sites, but the Staples site is the site that lends itself to a building like this very, very well. The building itself is surrounded by substantial pedestrian plaza outside, it's an attractive building that blends into the neighborhood and if those of you who are familiar with the work of Lavallee Brensinger and HOK you know that they bring local history and they have the culture of the local community to play in that building as evidenced by City Hall Plaza or the new Airport...there is a feel of Manchester in those buildings. What would go on inside...I mentioned before I'm not going to run down this list again, but what happens inside a building like this, inside a public assembly facility, inside a civic center/community gathering place is limited by the

imagination of those who want to use the building. This is part of what would take place there. Part of what would take place there is yet to be discovered. We don't want you to think of this as just a sports facility. This is a community gathering place and most important of these things are the local events that we don't have a venue to host now or anywhere in this State. We think this is an important component of what happens in a City like Manchester. The terms that we've agreed upon are before you on the Board, we will not use property taxes to construct or to operate the building. The City through MDC would own the building, the City will contribute a maximum of 80% of the capital cost from the Rooms & Meals Tax revenues or monies and those bonds would be insured for the life of the bond against any loss. If the Rooms & Meals Tax money should dry up, go away, the State of New Hampshire changes its mind on the sharing arrangement for the cities, the insurance that we would purchase and it is a purchase item, this is a commodity that you go out and purchase like life insurance or home insurance; that insurance would assure the timely payment of all principle and interest on the bonds put out by the City. Debt service - using the projection of the Rooms & Meals Tax money that we get from the State of New Hampshire, the Department of Revenue Administration using their projections from the first year through the 30th year there would be a minimum cushion of 30 percent more than the debt service we would need and we have a chart that we will bring up in a minute to show you what portion of the State's figures on the Rooms & Meals Tax money would actually go towards the construction of a civic center. As proposed, the MDC will lease the civic center to Ogden Entertainment, that's a 15-year lease...during that period of time Ogden would then protect the City against any losses, any operating losses that flow out of the building. Ogden will subcontract with Enron Energy Services for the energy infrastructure of the building; that is Enron would provide and finance the heaters, coolers, chillers, everything it takes to make that building operable and between Enron and Ogden they would provide a minimum of 20 percent, that's a minimum of 20 percent as opposed to the City's maximum of 80 percent of the financing of this facility. The combination between the two is what would be negotiated if the City decides to go forward, so we present this as a minimum and the City's share as a maximum. I think that needs to be clear. Okay, the player's I've introduced already, the terms that we've laid out before you meet the guidelines set down by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, they have asked us to accomplish those four elements, those four elements are now present in the City, they have stated their intention to put this building together according to the minimum guidelines that the City has asked for and meet all the safety requirements. We've done that, we'd like to hear your comments at this point. If there is nothing else we'd like to hear your comments and questions on this facility, Mr. Chairman. One thing, Alderman Thibault just pointed out to me

that the chart is on the Board, so if I can just run through this chart quickly it will come up. If you take a look at this chart, this chart as a whole represents all of the Rooms & Meals Tax revenue that would flow to the City of Manchester during the period of indebtedness of this facility, we're talking about a 30-year period of time and that chart represents all 30 years of the State's projections of the money that will come to the City of Manchester. The very, very bottom of that chart you'll see a green line, that solid green band is the portion of the Rooms & Meals Tax revenues that come to the City of Manchester now that historically the Aldermen have taken and put into the operating budget; that does not change; that base amount still goes into the operating budget every year. Above that you can see a dark blue area; that dark blue area as you can see it jumps up pretty quickly and represents when we'd start construction of the civic center and the debt service would start. If you built a house you know that the second you start construction the bank starts looking to you for either construction debt service payments or paying your mortgage, so that's where that comes from, but the yellow line represents the excess that comes to the City of Manchester during the life of this building, we're not talking about an all or nothing proposal on the Rooms & Meals Tax, we're talking about using a portion of the increased share of the Rooms & Meals Tax that the State says that they're sending to the cities and towns and in this case in particular Manchester, New Hampshire. As you can see the debt service which we have structured and we can insure takes a portion of this. The money's that are remaining are monies that are still left to the discretion of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen how they are to be spent. Does that cover the chart clearly. Now, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Wihby asked, Skip, if we could have a hard copy of the presentation too when you have a chance, all of the Aldermen would like one. I'm going to start...at the end of this public hearing the committee has a meeting and one of the items on the agenda for the meeting is to see if we can get a consensus on the referendum question that will be presented to the full Board tomorrow and then the full Board would vote on it and so, just so that I could through this out so that if anybody has any input on it tonight, the question is going to read:

“Should the Board of Mayor and Aldermen approve the issuance of up to \$50,000,000 fully insured bonds for the construction of a civic center in downtown Manchester, total project to be paid with private funds and a portion of the City's share of the State Meals and Rooms revenue?”

Chairman Wihby stated that is the question that is going to be brought tonight at the Committee meeting and if it passes brought to the Aldermen tomorrow and if that passes that's the question that will be on the November ballot for the constituents to answer. Again, we have 60 people that are signed up, so if we can keep the questions short and make sure we obey the 5-minute rule. First, I' going to call a couple of names so you can come down.

Mark Taylor, 78 Esty Avenue, Manchester, NH, stated:

I want to thank the Aldermen and the Committee for allowing me to speak. I have a tendency to ramble, so I am going to read. The first two observations, a couple of comments and opinions. The first observation is I find it funny that some of the same Legislatures that we send up to Concord feel that the City should not turn around and pay for the civic center when they voted against it in the State because they felt that the City should pay for it. I haven't quite figured that one out. Now, they say that the City can't do it. Number two, I've lived in the City of Manchester for 17 years and I've enjoyed watching public hearings like this and I've noticed that there are a number of people in the City of Manchester who have never been for anything, nothing. Whether it's teacher's raises, Police protection, fixing the roads, the only thing they're for is keeping the tax rate down. These same people are saying that you can't build a civic center because we should be using the Rooms & Meals Tax money in order to pay for school teachers and pay raises. You can't have it both ways folks. You're either for something or against it, but just two little observations that I've noticed over the years. Businesses need to reinvest its dollars in order to get a long-term returns and the City of Manchester also has to do this. The City of Manchester can fund schools, firemen, policemen with the money that it actually generates from the abutting property. I'm a firm believer that Quincy Marketplace and Faneuil Hall in Boston would not exist today if it wasn't for The Boston Garden. You get spinoff money, you get jobs. Also, the quality of life in a city is an issue for a business moving into the area and Manchester has a great history in terms of investing in quality of life issues. The Derryfield Country Club, McIntyre Ski area, all of the swimming pools. Those areas now the City spent money on are now generating enough money to run themselves, they're enterprise zones in the City and there's no reason why this couldn't be the same. Questions have been raised about the need to hire more Police and more people to pick up trash after there's an event or during an event. My understanding was that this was suppose to raise jobs. Golly, if we need more Police and people to pick up the trash and do things...that's jobs and it is paid out of the operating funds, it's not coming out of the tax base of the City. Lastly, in terms of a quality of life issue I've got two kids, they're 13 and 15 and I'm sick and tired of going to Boston, it cost me twenty bucks to park my car, thirty bucks

apiece to get to see the Ice Capades or whatever they are and hamburgers and hot dogs are four bucks. I can't believe it's going to cost that much in this City and even if it does, I'd rather leave my money in the City of Manchester than Boston. Finally, Skip, I want to thank you. I've served on committees in the City before, most of the time it's a thankless job and I have never tackled anything like this and they asked for volunteers, I don't think you volunteered, but I think you couldn't say no and the last comment is be aware that the groundwork is done for this facility, it doesn't have to be in Manchester, and if we don't do it some other city in the southern tier is going to be smart enough to do it. Thank you.

Robin Theodore, 33 Foch Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'd first like to say that up until this weekend I didn't know much about this project and when I first heard about it, I thought it was great. I thought it was the best thing that Manchester could ever do, I happen to be channel surfing this weekend and stopped on Channel 16 and I got an eye full and an ear full. I've got to tell you that my opinion has changed dramatically for a number of reasons. The first being that noisy little child back there is eventually going to be in one of Manchester's schools in the year to come and when he comes to me and asks me why his school is so overcrowded, why his school doesn't have computers, why he's not getting the best education possible, I don't want to have to tell him that the reason is because eight years ago somebody else decided you needed a civic center more than you needed a better school. Now, for my concerns...parking. I work on Elm Street, my husband works on Elm Street, both work for the same company. We have designated parking spaces in two of the facilities I assume you're going to use for parking...the Victory Street Garage and the 1000 Elm Garage. Now, am I to believe that every function that you've listed on that chart is going to be held Monday through Friday after five and on weekends, I don't think so. At some point you're going to hold a function that's going to be between eight and five Monday through Friday and I'm not going to have a place to park so I can go to work and I have a problem with that. My general question is whether you've done a demographic study on the income level of the people in the immediate area that would be utilizing this facility. I know it's not in my family budget to go see a hockey game at thirty dollars a pop. I don't know about everybody else, but I've got a mortgage, two car payments, I've got day care at \$150 a week, I can't afford to go see a hockey game. Heaven forbid I have another child, functions like this are just not going to be possible and I know that all through this presentation you've said that the taxpayers are not going to be impacted by this and I just don't

buy it. My overall sense is that if you're single or you rent an apartment in the City of Manchester, you get to use this civic center for free. You're a homeowner or you're a family with children you are going to pay the cost or you're kid's going to pay the cost.

Mr. Ashooh stated if I can just address a couple of your concerns when you spoke about the parking issue. Parking is an issue in Downtown all over during the day and I will tell you that 90 percent of these events, not all of them, but 90 percent of them will take place after five and on weekends because frankly that is when Manchester needs revitalization. I will also tell you that the events that would take place during the day, during business hours are typically trade shows, slide shows, these are business conventions. These are the functions that are appropriately held during the business week in an effort to bring more business to Manchester. Earlier this year we had a convention of travel and convention planners that came to this town...about 200 of them...they were enthusiastic about Manchester, but their biggest concern was we bring a show here to town, we bring a trade show here to town where are they going to go. We don't have the flat space to house it and last about parking...parking is an issue in a lot of areas in towns and frankly, I think that's something the City needs to address, but thank goodness we're going to address parking because it's a symbol of our growth, not because we just didn't have enough of it.

Joe Provost, 428 Amory Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

As far as Manchester is concerned if you build any civic center anywhere the first year everyone is going to go, it's new. But, we've all heard of Great Woods and Great Woods will be in three locations next year, STF Entertainment Group bought out Don Law and Great Woods will expand to Worcester Centrum and the Fleet Center when they're normally closed the Centrum and the Fleet Center next summer. To me, they are going to have all of the concerts for New England because Worcester is the second largest New England City and Boston's number one. The Lowell Tsongas Arena is already contracted with a Manchester station to tell us that WWF Wrestling is there this week. I want to know is STF Entertainment Group bigger than Ogden with bigger plans that could stifle Ogden and the referendum that the Aldermen are going to be talking about tomorrow night going to be on the November referendum different than what we know now.

Chairman Wihby asked what was the second part of the question.

Mr. Provost replied is the referendum question going to be elongated/added to than what we've heard over the weekend.

Chairman Wihby stated the referendum question that I just spoke on is the question that is going to be presented today and presented to the Aldermen and it's up to the Aldermen tomorrow, they can change it tomorrow, but right now this has been approved by the City Solicitor's Office.

Mr. Provost stated there will be a November referendum, correct.

Chairman Wihby replied that is going to be decided tomorrow.

Mr. Ashooh stated on your question of the sell out of Don Law. What's interesting about Don Law's sale of his business...prior to that sale event promoters around the country were kind of like godfathers with their own little fiefdom's and Don Law controlled New England. It is our understanding that with that sale a lot of these provincial barriers of who gets booked where and who controls those acts changes and that's not to say that Ogden has the power to take someone away from Don law's new owners, but Ogden does control a number of buildings in the northeast and when you control the buildings, you can control where an act plays in this part of the country...it also offers to these acts the opportunity to play a circuit. Ogden does bring that to the table and they also do their own promotion, so we think it is something that works.

Fred Kfoury, Jr. (President of Central Paper Products), 941 Chestnut Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I had some notes prepared but I am going to digress from them for a second. Not only is this going to be good for the citizens of Manchester, it's going to be good for the citizens of New Hampshire and it's not only good for citizens, it's going to be good for business. One of the things we have to emphasize is the spinoff effect and how that is going to generate revenue for the City of Manchester. The properties around the civic center are going to become more valuable, they'll go up in price, we'll get more tax revenue; that I am convinced of. What's more important is it's going to be creating jobs in the City, but it's not only going to be creating jobs as Mark indicated a little bit earlier in terms of employees to take care of the trash or to do the security functions, it's going to create jobs because of the spinoff effect. They'll be restaurants opening up, they'll be shops opening up, it's going to create jobs even in businesses down the road...who does the plumbing, who does the heating, and all of these buildings, etc. and yes who sells the paper and hopefully they'll buy their paper from us and then I can increase my employment or the people that I employ. What I really detest in this whole affair is the pitting of one segment of Manchester against the other and it was brought up by the lady that just spoke about the schools. Building a civic center has nothing

to do with the schools. And, in fact, it could be an advantage to the schools. It could create monies to invest in the schools and let me tell you I've been involved in the Manchester schools also and I was asked on their technology initiative and we supported it privately outside of tax funds with dollars from my company donated to the technology fund of the Manchester schools and we would probably do that again. Technology is important. This may be a way to generate. The more money, the more revenue, the broader we can make out tax base, the more revenue we can get in, the more revenue can be given to the schools and so we shouldn't pit the schools against the civic center. I think it would be a distinct advantage for everybody including the school system in the City of Manchester. Thank you.

Glenn Gamblin, 130 Tarbell Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'd like to thank the Board for the opportunity to present the views of the City. In my opinion, the civic center would be a boon for the City as a whole and the Downtown area in particular. As this is my first opportunity to do so let me congratulate the Board and the people of the City for the *Money* magazine findings and I think we all deserve some credit. Have we earned the right to rest on our laurels. Of course not. If you're not moving forward you're falling back. It is impossible to stand still. The choice is simple...take the deal that's offered or wait. Wait for what. This train's heading out of the station and at least as far as I know there's not late departure, there's no cheaper fare, you can get on board or don't. But, please get off the tracks. You're only muddying the question by blindly being negative to every suggestion that's made to improve the quality of life for the residents of this City whose best interest you purport to be so concerned with. Thank you for your time.

Allison Rawlings, Chapter President of the Greater Manchester Jaycees, stated:

Also with me is Kelly Walling a member of the Greater Manchester Jaycees. I'm coming to you tonight to speak in favor of the Manchester Civic Center on behalf of the young professionals of Manchester. Our organization is made up of young professionals age 21 to 39 and we do different projects in Manchester. We just held the Miss Manchester Scholarship Pageant last night and when it comes to being able to continue to do these projects we're looking to grow as an organization and one of the reasons why we're in favor of the civic center is to be able to retain and bring more young professionals into the area. When I'm looking to get married and raise a family I'm looking for the quality of life in a town and I've lived in Greater Manchester for about 10 years now and I'm looking to Nashua and I'm looking to Portsmouth, you know. There's a lot more places to go out, a lot more things to do, a lot more things that draw young professionals. So, that's important to our organization to be able to provide the opportunities for

a fund raising that we've done...we have seven members of our organization here tonight out of 25 and in addition a lot of entertainment dollars of my generation are not being spent in Manchester. They're going to Nashua, they're going to Portsmouth and Boston and we want to feel better about being from Manchester, more proud to say that we live in the Greater Manchester area, and having this can only be better for the area. I definitely want to applaud the efforts of the last couple of years, I've really seen...especially the last six months, a lot of improvements Downtown and it's funny I just saw three or four new shops that I never knew existed. When I came down to Joe Kelly's Sub Shop prior to coming to this meeting and I never would have known...unless there's a draw to bring me Downtown and people my age the business dollars are going to go elsewhere and I'll turn the mike over to Kelly.

Kelly Walling, stated:

I just have a few comments to add. I lived in Portsmouth for two years prior to living in Manchester and I've been here now for about two and a half years. I still go to Portsmouth every weekend. I leave this town and I spend my money out in Portsmouth. A lady made a comment earlier saying that it's the single people that are going to benefit from the civic center, but I don't agree with that. I think families and singles will both benefit from the civic center and what I've been considering over the past year and a half is buying a house or a condo. I haven't done that yet because Manchester doesn't offer me anything as it is right now. So, I've been holding off and possibly looking elsewhere to go. So, you're talking about a future family and a future person that would be buying here that may go elsewhere. So, it's the greater whole, it's looking towards the future, and attracting singles, families, and everybody else involved and I'm for the civic center. I think it's a great idea.

Brian Tremblay, 3 Rockforest Drive, Hooksett, NH, stated:

I started working at the Manchester Boys and Girls Club in 1975. Since that time the Boys and Girls Club...thanks to the generosity of many corporations and individuals has been able to take hundreds of boys and girls to events in Boston at Boston Garden Bruins games, Celtics, Ice Capades...virtually every activity that you had up on the screen except for big time wrestling, we haven't been there. The barriers that we faced over the years have been many in transporting the kids down there, finding the transportation, finding the drivers, finding the staff, timing is also an issue...an event gets over in Boston very late by the time you get back to Manchester. It's well past bedtime particularly on any school nights that we have tickets available. However, the benefits for us taking boys and girls are many to these activities. One of the benefits is that kids are exposed to activities that are run on a grand scale far beyond what they have ever experienced here in Manchester. Another opportunity is that it increases the awareness of what career

opportunities surround all of these activities that are run in a place like a civic center. Two other very simple things but very important things: one, is that kids learned how to function safely in a public forum and the other thing that they learned was how to function as a group in going into a place like a civic center and getting everybody out of there in one piece and getting home safely which we always did. A New Hampshire based civic center will have a vested interest in helping kids in its own home. The second thing is that New Hampshire corporations and individuals who have been very generous to Boys and Girls Club members want to keep their philanthropy local, so that will increase the opportunities for our children to experience professionally run events. And, the bottom line is more children will have access to participate in these types of events and I think if you contacted the Boys and Girls Club and clubs in Portland, Providence, Worcester, and Hartford you find that those organizations are major players in helping kids and those agencies. To those who would say that rock and roll concerts will be loaded with kids that are coming out on drugs and alcohol and having problems with behavior, I challenge any of those people to go to one of the award ceremonies at any of the high schools in Manchester and watch the kids and listen to what those kids say, their buttons will pop because we've got some wonderful kids in the community of Greater Manchester. The bottom line...by giving children every opportunity to experience a wide-range of activities. We increase their ability to make positive choices in their life. A civic center in Manchester can only strengthen that possibility. I thank everyone involved in this, thank you.

Ron Pappas, 80 Brennan Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

Good evening, Aldermen and Mr. Chairman. I own a small restaurant in Manchester called Pappy's Pizza, it's Downtown, so I'm obviously for a civic center. It would make Manchester a destination for people from other areas. A civic center would attract that crowd looking for entertainment and that crowd has the discretionary funds to buy lunch, dinner, souvenirs, etc. It would be a big attraction to the City and in the long-run increase the Downtown tax base. I'd like to remind Barry Brensinger, my friend, to include all aspects of handicapped accessibility so that the disabled community can also enjoy the civic center as much as others. Thank you.

Linda Seabury, 80 Brennan Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I also work in the City at the New Hampshire Institute of Arts. Twenty-nine years ago I graduated from this high school and made the conscious decision to stay in Manchester. In current years, through the efforts of "For Manchester" committees there has been a noticeable commitment to pride and growth. I believe that we need to follow through with this momentum and build the civic center. My only

question is has a price already been established to purchase the Staples location. Thank you.

Mr. Ashooh stated to answer the question on Staples...this is a study. The architects examined 12 different sites, Staples is our preferred and recommended site. We are not at the point that we can make an offer to anybody until the Aldermen decide to go forward or not with this project.

Jackie Domaingue, 102 Donahue Drive, Manchester, NH, stated:

Good evening. I don't thin there's a single person in this room and please stand up and wave your hands if there is who doesn't like to be entertained. You poor thing. So, this issue here is not whether or not the City of Manchester would like to have some entertainment because they would or you wouldn't be here. The issue here before you hopefully is not wouldn't it be nice to have a civic center, it's how are we going to pay for this monstrosity of an expense and that's really what you ought to be focusing on and I understand the plan and I've been there, on that Board, and I've done that and have seen those numbers and I still don't like the equation, Mr. Ashooh. Because you're still asking for the taxpayers to fund 80 percent of this building; that's what this is all about. I would love to have a civic center. I originally came from Connecticut, City of Hartford, had one, roof fell in, put the roof back on. Hartford Whalers, great team. I know about civic centers. I would love to see us have that kind of an entertainment facility but I want you to do it right and I want you to start right. Starting right means anteing up on the business end a helluva lot more than 20 percent. I'm not even going to...unfortunately, I turned the channel and caught you in the middle of your presentation when you were on the phone program and saw this discussion on public parking...we all know what the parking situation is in Manchester, do you really believe people coming to the civic center at the corner of Elm and Bridge Street are going to want to walk from the Canal Street garage in the winter. My biggest reason for coming here tonight is I'm sure that between all of you you can work out the finances but please remember that despite anything you may have heard here tonight there is no need for this kind of a facility to literally as has been phrased pit one segment of the community against another and unfortunately most of the people who are doing the pitting are the people who are for this. Because I've heard phrases like those who want to worry about their children in school are being negative, come on...they're not being negative, they saw that their tax money and the bonding of the tax money has spent \$9 million to get them a school that they weren't sure was going to open this year. Please, my main reason for coming here is to speak to the Aldermen who's Chairman of this Board and to say to you tonight you have an obligation to give the people a referendum on this issue

because the people with this issue have a right to speak on it. I don't care how many times you or anyone else on that Board has been elected. You're spending one heck of a lot of their money, they've earned the right to be heard on this issue. And, in closing, I will only remind all of the Aldermen that that's how you got where you are by voter referendum. They made a choice in the voting booth as to what they wanted, give them the choice again. Thank you very much.

Larry Constantine, 39 Devco Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I came here with a lot of prepared remarks tonight, but I'm going to skip a lot of this stuff. A lot is going to be hashed over and hashed over and hashed over. People are not going to walk from South Elm Street to this location, people on North Elm Street are not going to walk to this location, people on Hanover Street are not going to walk to this location. I think you have to do a lot, I know we're still in the planning stages and formulating a lot of things and I think throwing a lot of figures out there can solve a lot of problems. But, \$4.00 hamburgers and \$4.00 hot dogs...they'll probably be \$5.00...so, to my friend "Pappy" over there keep your prices. These things are going to happen. A couple of weeks ago I was in Lowell and I talked to the people down there and believe me the area around the civic center is the pits. Now, that's a fact and it's not that they don't want the civic center, I think a civic center is a great idea. But, it's going to mean you're going to have more crime, you're going to have more stolen cars, you're going to have more drugs and is the City prepared...you gentlemen there, is the City prepared to deal with this. That's one of the big factors. I want to see Manchester go ahead on a civic center...someplace...I don't think it's a save all or a cure all for all the juvenile and teenage problems that we may have or will have in the City, but it is a start somewhere down the line and I would also like to conclude this by saying you're going to need a lot of marketing on this and our people, the people who will frequent that civic center are not just the people from Manchester, we'll be a very small part because we're almost all...the greater portion of the City is on the lower end of the economic scale. At fifty bucks for a ticket or twenty-five bucks for a ticket is way beyond the capacity of many, many people in this City. So, you'll be dealing with people from Manchester and from Rhode Island and from probably the upper tier of Massachusetts. So, keep that in mind and bear all these things in fact as they are. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ashooh stated, Mr. Chairman, a point was brought up earlier that I was asked to respond to and I'd like to at this point because Mr. Constantine brought it up again. As far as ticket prices in this facility a hockey game may very well at Boston Garden run you \$45.00 a ticket and a Celtics' ticket may run you \$75.00, but the fact of the matter is that minor league sports represents one of the best

entertainment values in the country. We have built our financial pro forma in this facility on an average ticket price of \$10.00 with an entry level ticket of \$6.00. Those are reflective of what the national averages are for entertainment in a facility like this. Parking, by the way...as far as parking Downtown people may not want to walk a couple of miles, but I can tell you right now there are a lot of empty parking spaces in Downtown Manchester that generate no revenue for the City, do nothing for economic development, and the MTA has come to us and said they'd love to set up shuttle buses to bring people around. If you've got a number of City departments who are willing to work towards making something like this work so that your Downtown becomes more attractive, I think that's terrific and shouldn't be criticized.

John Lubelczyk, 17 Boisvert Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

Why not incorporate a walking all weather 4-mile track into the complex and for all to use, a great attraction utilizing the best material especially made for that purpose drawing you to the center...all ages, senior citizens and youth. Thank you.

Mr. Ashooh stated I am going to ask Barry Brensinger to come up and address the idea of incorporating a track inside the facility, so Barry, if you've got a second.

Mr. Brensinger stated in the current program we don't have an athletic track per se but if the interest is in having an indoor facility that might allow our senior citizens and others to enjoy the facility during the winter season by perhaps using its concourse to walk for exercise that will be a decision by the management company ultimately. But, I can tell you that we have visited and studied a number of other civic centers that do precisely that. It is used for walking exercise during the winter time. I'd like to make two other quick comments while I'm here in reference to recent comments that were made and I believe our Chief of Police is here somewhere, so maybe if he is indeed tonight he can back me up on this. Our understanding having studied a number of other civic centers and what we have read and researched on them is that, in fact, in the neighborhoods surrounding civic centers the crime rate tends to go down, not up as a result of the civic center. And, my last comment is I'm really speaking now as a citizen and not as a consultant to this project. I am a resident and business owner in Manchester as well. I keep hearing and I've heard for 20 years now how poor Manchester is. We can't do this, we can't do that. Frankly, I don't buy it. If you look at the demographics, if you look at the statistical information you'll find that Manchester

has one of the highest average per capita incomes in the country and that is part of the reason why we were voted Number 1 City in the East. So, clearly as do most cities we have a diversity in our demographics but we are not the poor City that we, at times, like to think we are. Thank you.

Millie Holton, 184 Merrimack Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I basically have two questions, so I'll say less than anybody here. Question number one, I was just curious...would the two buildings directly behind the proposed civic center site considered when determining that the site was the ideal one. These buildings are mainly just senior citizens and disabled. They deserve their peace just as much as anybody else does. But, I think a little bit more so. I don't think the civic center is going to give that to them. Number two, if this site fails, if Manchester doesn't vote that that is the ideal site or the plumbing doesn't work or whatever is there a Plan B and if so, what.

Mr. Ashooh replied if I understand the second part, I didn't pick up all of it. But, if the Staples site isn't appropriate when we get into this is there another site, is that what the second half of your question is. First, we avoided having this project depend on a specific site because we haven't done the engineering studies to see if Staples would allow for the construction of a facility like this and if we were to tie it to a specific site and run into that problem, we'd have to go through the whole process again. So, yes there's a Plan B...there are a number of properties in town that could support it. As a matter of fact what we are looking at is a corridor that runs from 293 up Granite Street to Elm Street. There's a fairly wide area that we could do that. But, all taken together, the Staples facility, the Staples site is a 9-acre parcel that has more than enough to handle this. For the first part of your question...is the elderly highrises behind. One of the things I think the people fail to understand is that a facility like this that we are talking about is not the behemoth that you see at The Fleet Center when you drive down the central artery and you see this huge building right up against the highway. You're talking about a facility that has the...we have the potential of being able to drop that building into the ground. In essence, the Kalivas Highrise behind it would tower over this building and you're also talking about creating a facility that would have tremendous open space around it...pedestrian plazas around it and that I can tell you right now is going to be a heck of a lot more attractive than six acres of hot top which is what we have here at this point. I can't tell you that Staples is absolutely the site because we don't know that. We just know from what we have been able to determine so far that all things considered it is the best site at this point.

Daniel Hughes, 746 Beech Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I own the building. I'm a 26 year old homeowner in the City of Manchester. I am for the civic center. Flat out, without a question. I'm going to run up a couple of reasons why I think it's a good idea and I think it's important that everybody understand these things. Have you ever heard of an organization called Distributive Education Clubs of America. They hold several conferences around the country. When I was in high school here in the City and in Merrimack we tried to bring a conference to New Hampshire. We couldn't because we didn't have a facility big enough to bring the conference. It held 3,000 students. The National Conference holds 10,000 students. We don't have a facility here big enough to bring those people and those dollars. When I went to those conferences I spent at least \$700 in hotels, in entertainment and eating out and all those types of things. We're missing the boat on that. We're missing the boat on the college division conferences as well. We're also missing the boat on indoor track and mentioned earlier about putting in an indoor track in the facility. all of the State indoor track tournaments are held in Durham, they're not held in Manchester and they should be held here. It's a great place to hold it, bring kids from all over the State to Manchester to eat in our restaurants, to spend time in our City. We're missing the boat. Basketball - St. A's, New Hampshire College...having the ability to have national tournaments, Division II tournaments here. We're missing the boat. Hotel rooms being rented out, restaurants being used, college exposure from all over the country in Manchester and we're missing out. I sat down, I heard the Mayor speak at one of these meetings a couple of weeks back or a week back and how he mentioned something very interesting about the dollars that we spend when we go to the Tsongas Arena, when we go to The Fleet Center, when we go to the Springfield Civic Center, the Providence Civic Center, the Portland Civic Center and I sat down and figured it out. In the next 12 months I will spend \$4,000 on going to events outside of Manchester. I'm going to spend a hundred bucks tomorrow night going to an event outside of Manchester that I'm taking my nephew to. We are missing the boat on that money because we don't want to build that type of a building. Somebody made a comment and I think it was Jackie Domaingue that made the comment about big business paying for this thing. I think that's great...I'm going to get a little angry here because I think that's one of the most ridiculous things I've ever heard. I listened to Brian Tremblay speak about the Boys and Girls Club and the company I work for is helping to support that program by raising the money. I think she's absolutely right, that makes sense. We should take all the money that local business gives to charities, take it all back and build a civic center and save the charities. Guess what, you guys figure out how you're going to raise your own money because we're going to build a civic center; that's one of the dumbest things I've ever heard. Everybody's

needs to pay their own way and that's what will happen if this thing is ever built. These companies give millions to the community. Maybe as a tax owner maybe I'll give a little back; that's fine, but I have a problem with that. Everybody says if we use the Rooms & Meals Tax to pay for this thing that we're not going to get it back off our taxes. One think I've learned in 26 years from my parents and myself in owning a building is that these big dollars don't come back in a tax cut. They may be used for something else, they may go somewhere else. But, nobody's going to come back and say...hey, Dan you're a nice guy we're going to lower your taxes this year, it ain't going to happen. Manchester is growing...I told you I own a home. I own a three apartment house in Manchester. It took me 24 hours to rent my apartment. I put it in the paper on Wednesday, I had 15 calls on Wednesday, I had 15 calls on Thursday, I finally put on my answering machine because I was sick of having 27 minute answering machine messages...in 24 hours I rented the building out. My wife and I are actually looking to buy another building now because the economy is so good in Manchester and we actually want to have another building that we own that we can rent out. One of the things that I had always thought and when I was in high school and we did events at the high schools and stuff like that was when you...and I may be wrong about this and somebody on the Board may be can answer this question...but, if you hold events at a civic center...if I'm understanding this the City doesn't just provide you police officers in the building. You actually have to pay those people, the people that run the events have to go to the City and say we're going to pay these people to come and work. They don't just say because we're here you owe us, give us cops and give us firemen, it doesn't work that way. So, the fact of the matter is that all of this money is going to be spent for police officers, it's going to drain the taxpayers is not true. So, don't believe it. I'm going to put a challenge out not only to the committee and to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, but also to the citizens of Manchester. To the Board, I challenge you to put this on the ballot, let it be voted on and support it. The Airport was built a few years back and it was supported and I remember the Mayor speaking a few years back when he was running for another office about how he had led this charge and how the Aldermen had led this charge and other people had led this charge...lead this charge, be the leader so your kids and my kids and everybody else's kids can look back and you can say look what I've done. I challenge you. I also challenge the residents of the City of Manchester to come out and vote and support this. Make a difference. Whatever you do, make a difference. The Airport is a difference, it's a change, it's an advantage...the last thing I'm going to say on this point is I've been watching this

thing all weekend long and all the events and I am sick of the politicians that are coming up here and using this pulpit as an advantage to try to further their own political career. If you've got an opinion, get up here and state here. But, don't get up here and use it as your pulpit to further your political career. Thank you very much.

Eric Emmert, 145 W. River Drive #13, Manchester, NH, stated:

Good evening. Home...no other word in the English language warms our heart like the work home. The thought of home stirs emotions within us of security, comfort, pride. Home is a safe haven for our children, home is where we create warm memories for the future. Our home is an extension of the very essence of our very being. Manchester is our home. When asked where we're from we quickly respond Manchester with a sense of pride in our voices. Our neighbors are friends, our sports teams are the best, our cultural opportunities abound and we call it all home. Manchester is indeed our home. The visionaries who sit before us tonight, they also live in our home, they volunteered many hours on this project to better our home of Manchester. This home improvement project, the addition of a civic center is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. This civic center home improvement protects the residents from any financial losses. It is a non-property tax project. A civic center will reduce crime, increase property values, create jobs, and showcase our home. We're all here tonight because we deeply care about our home. Those who question this home improvement project have every right to be concerned. After all, it's our home. Their concern is a testament to the strong pride they have in Manchester and the longing to sustain the community which we call home. However, as proven in this report our proposed civic center will not adversely affect the citizens of Manchester. In fact, as property values increase, as jobs are created, as new businesses open their doors, as the tax base broadens our home will see a reduction in crime and the potential for lower property taxes. Neighborhood Housing Services Director Felix Torres eloquently stated a number of concerns he has for our home at last Tuesday night's public meeting. Among those were traffic and parking. Alderman O'Neil has also demonstrated a concern for the parking issue. The members of the MDC were not directly challenged to address the parking issue although it was a factor in their report. These issues are concerns that must be addressed, however, they are not insurmountable. In short, they should not detract from our home improvement dream. Every four years the world focuses on our home as we proudly host the First in the Nation Presidential Primary. Adequate facilities for our guests should be a top concern. As media focus and attention from around the world grows to a fever pitch ask yourself what will the world think of Manchester. Our actions regarding this home improvement project can extend well beyond the boundaries and confines of our home. They beckon visitors, candidates, guests to come see our home and send the message

you are welcome here. The time has come to grow Manchester, to invest in our future, to add on to our home. Together let us build a civic center, improve our home, and send a clear message to our communal family and the country that we are truly deserving of our Number 1 ranking. Ladies and gentlemen, I strongly encourage you to support this home improvement project and foster the world class development our home deserves. Thank you very much.

David Garcia, 43 Lavista Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. I am strongly in favor of the civic center. I grew up in Worcester, Massachusetts at a time where that City's downtown area was very much in dire need of revitalization, it was dying. I grew up probably a ten-minute walk from the Worcester Centrum and it was the best think that ever happened to that City, the spinoff money, the private investments that came in on top of all of the other things vastly outweighed the cons of the things the people were saying that were negative about it. I have been watching Community Television and I never heard the term "what if" so many times. I've listened to people who have sat there and who must live life every day in total despair and hopelessness. What's funny is yesterday and I had planned to be here tonight...yesterday I got home and there was a flyer on my doorstep that says as follows: from Representative Raymond Buckley and Steve Vaillancourt and it says "Ward 8 will host a final public hearing on whether the City should bond \$45 to \$50 million of property taxpayer money to build a civic center" and if I didn't know anybody the return address on this should read 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue because this is the biggest bunch of bologna that I've ever read. Excuse me, I'm a little nervous tonight, I'm not much for public speaking, but I feel very strongly about this. They are trying to mislead those who are uninformed or who really don't care about what's going on in our City and I am rather very offended by literature like this that is flying around out there. Build a civic center, it will provide for this City much more than entertainment. It will provide a much larger tax base, it will provide jobs, it will provide revitalization for the Downtown area. The money that will come in from private organizations and I watched the economic explosion in Worcester after the Centrum was built, it was undeniable and it was also unbelievable. I saw things happening there that people never thought would happen and it continues to this very day...14 years after I moved to Manchester. Thank you.

Christine Borrazas, 459 Central Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I just want to say that I think that the place should be built here because a lot of my friends can't go to Boston to see a lot of concerts and I can't either and I think that we should have a place built because a lot of us are missing out on all these things and I'm speaking for all the teenagers because we want to do all these fun things while we're still young and we just want to have a lot of fun, so that's how we feel and thanks.

Frank Weaver, 136 Beech Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

My friends. I arise tonight to speak against the proposed civic center as planned. My problem is with the poor showing of area business in coming up with only 20 percent funding. It would seem to me that with all the Chamber of Commerce people here tonight we should get 50 percent, at least, now. If we all really pull together in a community spirit such as shown during the great mill closure we can succeed in building a civic center with private funding in its entirety. As we all know, area business will gain with a civic center presence, so where is the problem. If this civic center is what it's proponents say all area business large and small should get on board, thus making it affordable. As such, I oppose taxpayer money for the use of this project. As I firmly believe taxpayer funds could be better used in education, what good is a civic center if the students can't read the signs. I also object to the proposed location. Tell me, what Van Otis would be in the scheme of things...a memory; that in itself is a crime. We have plenty of room with excellent access on Dunbarton Road. Don't listen to the ones who say it can't be done. We are from Manchester, New Hampshire, we can do anything. In closing, I believe we need a civic center if we are to stay Number 1. Let's face this with a renewed commitment to private funding. After all, it seems only logical that the more private funding going into this occurs, the more area businesses will show. People always spend other people's money quicker than their own and this would be no exception. Let's make this happen with as close to total business participation as possible. Thank you.

Mr. Ashooh stated, Mr. Chairman, if I could answer some of the points made there and I'll make this brief. I don't want to take any of your time, Mr. Hebert. But, the question of private funding. As far as the percentage of the private funding that we secured in this building, I think people have to remember two things and that is that the Aldermen asked us to put together this facility with significant private investment, but absolutely no risk for the taxpayer. Now, we can get more private investment...what that private investment means as Mr. Stern's said the other night that the taxpayers are going to have to start accepting some of the risk of the building. The cost of private capital is more than the cost of capital when

furnished by a city, so by trading off all of the risk in a building to someone with private investment we can accomplish the goals, we can't do it any other way. And, the last thing on this Dunbarton Road may be a great site, but the focus of this project is Downtown revitalization. I don't think that a facility on Dunbarton Road would accomplish anything for Downtown.

Al Hebert, Jr., 235 So. Porter Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

Some of you know me, I'm a former Alderman of Ward 8 and I'm a former Zoning Board of Adjustment member, I'm a lifelong resident of the City, and I'll have 57 years next month in Manchester. My family has been conducting business in Manchester for over 90 years. I grew up in business and I know what sweat and hard work is. I know what the common people are. To preface my position statement on the civic center proposal that is before us, I will quote from the Gospel of Matthew Chapter 5, Verse 37 -- "But let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay. For whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." And, I too, like Fred Kfoury had some prepared statements but I'm going to digress a little bit, I think I'm on the other side of the isle from Fred and I'm going to make it clear right up front what my position is. I am 100 percent opposed to spending taxpayer's money on a civic center. I am also opposed to building such a complex at the Staples location or any other location. The delicate infrastructure of our central City's rich heritage, what is left of it, would be destroyed forever with such a misfit enterprise. The people must have the opportunity to vote for referendum this coming November on this civic center proposal and a little insert note here - when I was an Alderman back in 1995 and we were going over the issue of putting in a Historic Overlay in our Zoning Ordinance and we are about to go into one of the meetings, I happened to ask Mr. MacKenzie who is our Planning Director...I said, Bob, of the original Millyard complex how much do we have left and he said well, I don't have the exact figures in front of me, but he said I think a good ballpark...we've lost 50 percent of it and the buildings continue to come down in our City and so goes the memories of our heritage, the roots of our community, and I'm sick of it. And, I'm going to take off on something that Mrs. Domaingue said and I believe she's 100 percent correct. I've been watching these programs on TV and I commend the speakers that have had the fortitude to come forth and speak their opinions whether they're pro or con, but I have noticed that the greater majority of the people who have done the attacking are the pro civic center people and I take offense to this. I'm not only speaking for myself tonight, I'm speaking for a lot of the little people out there whom I know personally out there...many of them I've grown up with and some of them have passed on, but I still live on so that I can probably do something to help their memory and so their lives would not be in vain like both of my parent's, my grandparent's, my great-parent's and I

really take offense to this. I think that...I'm not...the civic center to me in itself is probably a good idea in the right place and done in a right way, but I believe this whole thing has been done in the wrong way. When I was an Alderman and I was sitting on that Board in December of 1994 the second meeting of the month and I walked in there and I saw the cameras (Channel 9 and I saw news media) I said what's up. The next thing we know, the Mayor had orchestrated...the Hunter Study came in and they were there, Mr. Hunter and they plopped in front of us these nice fancy booklets, the feasibility study, and then they had a nice slide show and then we were supposed to very quickly speed read all the material and come up with intelligent questions. Well, I did have a few questions, there were things that I didn't see in there and I asked them about the cost of police in the area, the traffic issues, fire and so on and I was told that this was just incidental, it didn't mean much. Well, being a gentleman, I didn't say anything but in my mind I said to myself - what do you think I was born yesterday. So, anyway as the months went by different votes were taken on the Board and you all probably remember when they tried to force that legislation up in Concord to get the State to guarantee that if we use the Rooms & Meals Tax money and the revenue stream dried up that the State would guarantee to make the payment, well, they threw it out. Anyway, can I just saying one thing.

Chairman Wihby replied go ahead, Al.

Mr. Hebert stated in closing I would call on all Manchester citizens to once again celebrate what we already have and not fail to remember the rich ethnic heritage that built our beloved City and not allow ourselves to be strong armed into something that we know is not good at this time and the place being proposed.

Joe Levasseur, Joe Kelly's Sub-Shop (Owner), Elm Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

Good evening, Aldermen, and thank you for patiently sitting through these valuable and information public hearings. I'm not only here as a proponent for the civic center, I come here as a representative of Downtown Manchester, a representative of my ward, and as a representative of the City I call my home - Manchester. As we are all well aware this is a very special place to live. I was born, raised, and educated here in this City and when I was a young boy my dream was to one day own and operate a business in Downtown Manchester. Not only do I have a business on Elm Street, but I also make my home there - 866 Elm Street. This I have done for the past 12 years. When I opened Downtown there were 15,000 full-time employees. Now, there are seven to eight thousand full-time employees. Now, I work a lot more hours and I work longer weekends.

Adjustments had to be made...instead of people coming to us we have to go to them. If we would not have done these things, I would be out-of-business. Many people say why don't you just move. I say, why don't you just give us your vote. I'm not some corporate giant that can afford to pay rent at the Mall, but I'm also not some corporate giant that gets up and leaves its employees behind looking for greener pastures. I am Manchester, I am its son, I am the product of its Boys Club, YMCA, Fun in the Sun, and its educational system. I didn't leave when times got tough, I just worked harder. Why? Because this is my home. I'd like to take a moment to talk about the taxes for a minute. A representative of our State, I saw her on television the other day came up with a nice phrase to scare you about our priorities...increased taxes, concentrated wealth. This same individual who knows should know that without capital investment and in this case it will be a boon for restaurants, hotels, and the like...without capital investment we are never going to be able to pay for any increases in the educational demands of our children and City services unless we keep on raising property taxes. We cannot continue to increase property taxes without help from other venues. Listen folks, every time you go out and eat you pay a Rooms & Meals Tax whether you like it or not. It is a State tax, not a Manchester property tax. We have an opportunity to take that Rooms & Meals money that the State gives us back and disperse the wealth right here in our own City. Now, that sounds pretty smart and penny wise to me, talk about a no brain investment. Invest here, keep it here, receive the benefits here. The way I see it maybe many of our wonderfully educated young adults will stay here instead of moving away. In the last 12 years, I have collected over \$150,000 in Meals & Rooms Tax money for the State of New Hampshire. When the civic center is built I will have collected at least and that's without the projections of any increases in Rooms & Meals Tax or increases in prices, in ten years I will collect \$450,000 for this great State of New Hampshire for the Meals & Rooms Tax money. I am just one small pizza place, a small business, but many more will come and contribute more money. The second floor of my building lies vacant, but when the civic center is built the restaurant will increase by 75 seats. More Meals & Rooms taxes for the State, higher valuation of my building, higher property taxes to the City, a civic center will help myself and other Downtown merchants greatly. I understand the need for education for I am a product of an excellent one. One that I received right here in this school. Increased taxes - concentrated wealth, it's time to concentrate the wealth in a place that will only improve and generate more taxes for the education of our children. It doesn't make sense to keep increasing property taxes and not making capital investments especially with money already available and I want to turn my attention to my home and my business. The greatest thing about Downtown is that it really is

“ours”. It is owned by the people of this City, it is our meeting place, it is where we congregate to settle issues and make important decisions. Manchester’s roots are firmly entrenched there. When you drive Downtown you can still feel its proud history, I’m proud of it now and when you see how City Hall’s been renovated and how many merchants have refaced the front of their stores, you too will feel the pride. We are working very hard down there and it’s beginning to show. With the help of a terrific Mayor and many Alderpersons who have been blessed with foresight, an honest desire to recreate Downtown’s old magic, Downtown has begun to bear the fruit. Several signs of Elm Street’s old self are coming back. Downtown merchants, most of whom live, work, and grew up in this City who for years and years have been hanging on for something positive, something big, something energetic is hopefully about to arrive. The final piece of the puzzle is here - the Manchester Civic Center. It is now within your power to help your own. To help yourselves and to finally help people that are your own. I envy the Board of Mayor and Aldermen as they have been presented with an opportunity to erase old ghosts and breath new life into the heart of their City, a part of the City that each and every one of them remembers as once being an integral part of their lives - parades, fireworks, bus rides, and cruising Elm Street.

Alderman Rivard interjected, Joe, you’ve got to wrap it up.

Mr. Levassure replied one more minute, I will be done - 25 years ago another Board of Aldermen were presented with an opportunity to bring Jordan Marsh Downtown. Afraid that competition would hurt local business people and choke an already congested Elm Street, the Board did not vote Jordan Marsh in. Downtown has never since recovered. Trust me on this one folks, I’ve been Downtown for a long time...there’s plenty of parking down here after five o’clock and there isn’t any congestion. We merchants sit there like the Maytag repairman waiting, waiting, waiting. We are well rested and look forward to serving your every needs.

Chairman Wihby stated, Joe, please.

Mr. Levassure stated folks I’m sorry to take up a little more time than usual but obviously I feel pretty important about it.

Alderman Shea, Ward 7, stated:

A ward that abuts Ward 8. I want to just clarify a couple of things before I begin. The figure that I spoke to at the Aldermanic hearing I got that figure from the newspaper dated June 23, 1997 and I quote "the City intends to use Rooms & Meals Tax aid from the State to finance the project which earlier estimates pegged at \$45 million."; that is the figure I got.

Chairman Wihby stated that is correct.

Alderman Shea reiterated that's correct, right. Now, it's up to \$59 million or \$57 plus two.

Mr. Ashooh interjected no, Sir. What you're mistaken on is the City's portion. I think the example is \$45 million which is the same number we're talking about today.

Alderman Shea stated if it's up to \$59 million and \$11.4 million is going to be contributed, if you subtract \$11.4 from \$59, it doesn't give you \$45.

Mr. Ashooh stated again we went through this at the final presentation to the Board, if you recall, the \$57 million number is the project cost, the additional \$2 million is like the closing costs that you'd have on the mortgage for a house which brings it to \$59 million and that \$59 million number is the all in number included in the financing costs, the insurance on the bonds, and everything else.

Alderman Shea asked what about the expense of buying property, is that included in the \$57 or \$59 million. In other words, you're negotiating either Staples or someone else that would be included.

Mr. Ashooh replied that is why I made the statement to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen that as proposed with the recommendations we have including the Staples site and the like...based on those numbers that's what the number is going to be if the Board were to choose to change any portion of this then you would possibly increase or decrease that number.

Alderman Shea okay, now let me address a couple of other issues. I know Mr. Brensinger and this doesn't concern you mentioned about Manchester...I was listening to a program on television Channel 16 and I was taken by the fact that one of the commentators mentioned that 85 percent of the women in the households in Manchester have to work. In other words, it's the highest

percentage of women in the country who are housewives or single mothers that have to work. So, that the Manchester economy is not predicated upon the people who live north of Webster Street, it's predicated on the people who live all over the City.

Mr. Ashooh stated, Mr. Shea, I think you may want to check the figure because I have a feeling that a high percentage of people north of Webster Street also have two household incomes.

Alderman Shea stated that is correct, I'm including everyone; that is why they can afford to live there, some of them, because they need to work. Okay, I'm not disparaging. Now, as far as the Worcester Center is concerned, Alderman Thibault and I went down there. The Civic Center in Worcester cost six to eight million dollars. The new convention center that they built cost \$37 million...\$19.1 million was given to them by the State, \$1.5 million was private donations leaving about \$17 million that was given or contributed by the local populace which is a lot different than \$45 million, I think we'll both agree on that.

Mr. Ashooh stated yes, Sir, we will. I think we'll also agree that Massachusetts does things a lot different than we do here in New Hampshire.

Alderman Shea stated yes, because of the tax structure. Now, I want to just to onto my prepared statements, if I may. To facilitate the highest and best use of the assets of the City of Manchester was the mission of the Civic Center Committee which you headed very capably and I want to commend you for that and it's for the benefit of all of its citizens. Now, I have a paper here which is the Mayor's Utility Coordinating Committee, so if people don't think that Manchester is doing well, let me quote from this. The Mayor's Utility Coordinating Committee lists under Planning 16 projects being processed. Primarily real estate residential buildings. The site plan which is another facet has 32 on-going projects with a proposal for an addition to another facility. My purpose in mentioning this is that these items are tax monies that will be coming back to all the citizens. These particular projects will benefit all the people directly, it will help the tax base, all right. This is my point in bringing this to your attention and it will reduce the tax burden. Let me again refer to the mission statement and repeat it..."to facilitate the highest and best use of all of the assets of the City of Manchester for the benefit of all the citizens." Allow me to quote from the *Nation's City Weekly* dated 8/24/98 which is sent to all of the Aldermen. In the headlines it says, "Toy Town Wars Farms and Jobs to Dayton, Ohio" it is not uncommon to be earning as much as \$45,000 four years out of high school"...

Alderman Rivard stated time's up, Alderman, can you complete it please.

Alderman Shea stated "the City is redeveloping a site near Downtown to promote expansion of Dayton's tooling and manufacturing sector. Public and private sector funds will help to finance the project including a grant from the EPA, the Environmental Protection Agency, regional tax dollars, and contributions from the local tax industry." Let me comment again, this project will benefit all the citizens by helping with the tax structure plus provide jobs and provide a financial reason for keeping the young people in Dayton. In other words, the money is going directly into industry. Why can't...

Alderman Rivard asked how much do you have left, Aldermen, it's been six or seven minutes already, how much time, can you wrap it up.

Alderman Shea continued by stating why can't a committee be formed/modeled after the type Mayor Mongan formed which consisted of prominent business leaders and present solutions to the Downtown problems. Rooms & Meals revenues could be used in the planning and with federal, regional, and public/private funding full-time jobs would be created and young people would then want to remain in our community. Now, I have a couple of other...

Chairman Wihby stated, Alderman Shea, what we can do is at the end of this if everybody's spoken we can have you come back again, if you'd like.

Alderman Shea stated thank you, I know where he stands on the civic center.

Stanley Spirou, 99 Ward Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

Alderman Shea you have a lot of guts, I've seen him box before, don't get him mad. I'm also the head basketball coach at New Hampshire College. I know a lot of you in the room probably feel that there's another jock that is for the civic center because of the idea that it will help our program, help the school, and so on. But, I can say that I'm coming from a different direction. Sure, it's going to help our program if we get some of the teams from other parts of the State to play once-a-year it might have a small part in the equation, it will help the school. But, I can also tell you that I did have two businesses Downtown for many years and I'm sure that a lot of the Aldermen remember during those years "invest in the community because something will get done." We had a travel agency on Elm Street and we had a luncheonette on Hanover Street. We waited, we waited, and waited and the only thing that was born during that time was the Mondev model and that didn't go that well. We had to sell. Three or four years ago I was called

to be part of this committee to favor the civic center and I told the people on the committee that I would not be a cheerleader for anyone to build something that we really don't know all the details. I was for the civic center and what I told the committee I need to learn how we're going to pay for this. Over the next three years along with other people (citizens) formed a game plan and right now I feel very comfortable that this thing should go on. I also...our family still owns a triple decker, maybe a slap shot away from the proposed site. Let me tell you from experience, we've been fortunate the last few years to travel and play in some of the arenas that were mentioned here tonight all the way down to Louisville from Springfield, Albany, Worcester, and during those times it was amazing to see what has happened to some of those communities because of the convention centers, because of the civic center in place. I had no problems bringing my family to these venues, watching us play, and then at the end at nine, ten o'clock, eleven o'clock at night asking questions where do you want to go eat, walk three or four or five blocks and having a decision to go to five or six different places and having a decision to stay at three or four different hotels. In talking to some of those people that made all this stuff happen one of the things they said as coach you will not believe the difference in this community, the competition amongst restaurants, the competition amongst hotels to get into the picture and everything else would trickle down and you would walk for three or four blocks and it was something that I couldn't believe especially I haven't gone to those communities prior to the times we were invited to play in these tournaments. In terms of the parking, no question that the three decker that we rent on Spruce Street will have an impact, but I think all of the citizens that if this is the only problem we can deal with if we have a parking problem then it's healthy. The civic center will be working, people will be working, there will be activity, and if we cannot deal with a simple problem like parking then I think all of us are in trouble. In terms of the basketball sense to win in basketball you need a center and great point guard. This community right now...somebody has labeled us Number 1. To stay Number 1 you already have the center which is the Airport. Now, we need that point guard to compliment it which is the civic center, Aldermen, let's get it done. Thank you.

A. Roland Belisle, 99 Hudson Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I want to thank all of the Committee and Mr. Ashooh for doing their job. I've been here for 70 years, was born in the home my dad built and I love this City very much and I have a business here...my dad started many, many years ago and I hope it continues, I think it will and I'll pass it onto my son. I am one thousand percent for the civic center. I feel very bad and I almost played a violin for some of the people that cry and moan because I haven't been here twenty years or thirty years, I've been here many years and my dad would be well over a hundred if he were

alive and I am sure he'd want a civic center. Civic Center is not going to hurt anybody and like the wisemen that spoke this evening about a civic center is not against education...we should all work together. In fact, if we don't have a civic center how are we going to get more monies to pay for schools and education. We're just going to dwindle down and down and down and I can almost hear that silence, the death throws of my City that I love so much. Please don't let it happen. Please work for the civic center. I for one there was something mentioned about Lowell, I wouldn't live in Lowell. I can walk these streets at night, I wouldn't want to work in Lowell or in Lawrence. One street, my God. Downtown Manchester...we are all good people, let's stick together, let's grow. I hear some people sounding like they're backwards people they want to keep with their plows and their horses, they don't want to advance. We're talking about modernization, getting ahead, let's get ahead then and as the young man that spoke overtime he said it well then I heard boos and guffaws and all that...I apologize to that man and yet when this other man was speaking we that want the civic center didn't boo and guffaw him. Now, who is a better sport...the ones that don't want it or the ones that want it. Thank you.

Dan Halpin, 9 Eastman Avenue, Bedford, NH, stated:

I live right on the Manchester/Bedford line. As I was sitting here tonight listening to the various pros and cons on this, I was struck by something that Mr. Hebert said and he said we ought to celebrate the past. But, you know I think he was only half right. We ought to celebrate the future as well because that's what we're all going to experience and it occurred to me that we are on the horizon of a very significant event. An event that we will experience and others will never experience. For one thing, we are on the horizon of a new century and it's customary for great cities to do something of significant importance at the time of such an event and one of those events could be a gift by the City of Manchester to its citizens, its business people, and its surrounding area...to give a great gift of a civic center, let's say, to the people to inaugurate the new century. And, with some vision the same Board of Mayor and Aldermen could provide a blueprint for the future generations because not only are we going into a new century, but we are going into a new millennium and hundreds of years from now when people research the history of this City they will look back and see that it had the vision to provide a very creative gift for its people and give an inspiration to those who follow as to how they might treat their citizens of tomorrow. Thank you.

Brian Murray, 16 Wedgewood Lane, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm not here to philosophize I just want to ask a few questions because to be quite honest, I'm not committed one way or another on this civic center. But, I am interested in...based on the \$96 million cost to debt the civic center, how long will it take based on the estimates you've done for this economic dynamo to generate enough increase in the commercial tax base to recover that \$96 million, that's question number one and if you could just make note, I'll talk...I'll probably be done in two minutes...I also found that it was interesting that Enron is going to sublease...I believe then that they have 15 percent of the 20 percent unless I'm wrong. I found that odd that they would contribute about \$8 plus million dollars and Ogden would contribute a lesser amount, I would like to know if you could speak to that, please. And, of this money that Enron is going to contribute will that be for actual equipment in the building, I believe MDC will own the building, will they actually own equipment in the building and will they be allowed to depreciate that equipment as capital equipment. I also would like to know, Mr. Girard cited the magnificent job they've done in Grand Rapids with the Van Andle Arena and, of course, you've cited numerous time the Centrum. I find it ironic that in both of those cases SMG manages the facility...I think that if we really want this thing to be really successful maybe we want to go with someone who has really proved their capability as has been referenced in the numerous meetings. I know that SMG was consulted, could you talk and tell us why SMG was not accepted. I have heard the SMG felt that Ogden had an inside track on the project. Thank you.

Mr. Ashooh stated first of all, I'll take your questions in order. The \$96 million price we're talking about represents an annual investment of the City of somewhere in the neighborhood of \$3 million a year if you take a look at the debt service that we have. What we're trying to do is bring back approximately \$1 billion of real estate value that was lost here over the last ten years. This is a 30-year plan to bring back that \$1 billion, we think the impact of that investment will be felt in the first few years. How fast that payback happens I think there are many factors involved...the State of the economy at that time, the willingness of people to invest, but I can tell you right now that unless we do this the Downtown tax base will not come back. Number two on Enron -- Enron has offered a capital contribution to the building and I've got Mr. Longbottom here from Enron and he'll talk about that..their percentage and what actually goes into the building.

Mr. Longbottom stated to answer that about the amount of investment we put in as opposed to Ogden Entertainment, I can't speak for them. But, I can tell you that the value that we put in is basically estimated on the value of the energy infrastructure that we'll be supplying for the building. So, that's where that number comes from. So, it's predicated on the estimates of what that construction cost would be.

Mr. Murray asked was I ought-of-line with the \$8 million roughly.

Mr. Longbottom replied I can't answer that question totally yet because we haven't gone through the final design of the facility to find out exactly where it is. We're in very early conceptual stages and that that's our best estimate at this point in time.

Mr. Murray asked will you own the equipment and will you depreciate it.

Mr. Longbottom replied we will own the equipment, yes, the asset until the end of our participation in the project because we're basically responsible to deliver the energy to the building. So, that becomes our property that we have to maintain, so yes, we get the write-off on it, but we also get the maintenance costs involved in it...we do a life cycle costing of it as opposed to a job that's bid and you pay the maintenance for it after the first year.

Mr. Murray stated so, the City will own the building but you'll own the power infrastructure.

Mr. Longbottom replied we will own internally that energy infrastructure and at the end of the term of the contract that we have with Ogden then becomes the property of the City.

Mr. Murray stated one last question. Can you tell me what your income tax rate is for Enron, the corporation's tax rate.

Mr. Longbottom replied I really don't know that off the top of my head.

Mr. Ashooh stated the last question you asked was about SMG. If you look at it it's the maximum rate that you pay as a corporation with is at 34 percent now.

Mr. Murray stated probably 38 percent.

Mr. Ashooh stated as far as this SMG goes, let me address the process that we used to select the building manager/concessionaire. In April of 1997, we started on a process where we solicited bids for interested parties to run the facility and provide concessions. Seven different firms responded to the RFP's, we interviewed all seven firms, we did three elimination rounds, we got down to three final candidates...Volume Services, Ogden Entertainment, and SMG which is the old Specta Cor Management which has gone through a couple other buyouts and is now know as SMG. The requirements that we had by the Aldermen were very, very, very specific. We cut them no slack on what they were allowed to offer us in response to what the Aldermen asked for. Our first candidate, I can tell you in the early rounds, the first candidate was Volume Services, they came to us with what we thought was a very, very interesting plan. But, starting with that first round we then went back to each of the three finalist and asked them on three different occasions to refine their proposals and we weren't playing guesswork with them. We said this is what we must have for the City to have this deal go forward and included in that was a guarantee -- absolute -- against operating losses in the building. Volume Services okay...this was the nature of their guarantee, Ogden said okay this was the nature of their guarantee, SMG said to us it's against corporate policy to guarantee against operating losses, but we're going to give you guys a scoreboard and at the end of the term of depreciation when we depreciate it, you can have it. Interestingly enough, the length of term depreciating a scoreboard is about its useful life. When the lights start to go out and you don't get the big picture anymore and the hockey player tends to disappear that is what SMG was offering us. It was unacceptable on its face, we gave them three different opportunities to change their proposal to meet the standard that the City set, they would not do it, we ruled them out. We went with what we had with what was the best deal on the table...Ogden had the ability to make the guarantee, they made the guarantee, they have the capital to stand behind it...we were satisfied with that; that's the process.

Mr. Murray stated on the \$1 billion that you cited, were you citing the \$1 billion as just the loss tax base to the City or were you saying that \$1 billion is all we need over the life of the project to recover our investment.

Mr. Ashooh replied in the last eight or nine years, the City of Manchester has lost in it tax...I think we've gone from about \$4.3 billion down to \$3 billion worth of assessed valuations in the City. If you take a look at the number of dollars that that would represent in revenues to the City that is what we are trying to recover and that would certainly outstrip the cost of \$96 million total over 30 years.

Alderman Rivard interjected last question, Brian, last question.

Mr. Murray stated I presume...all I'm asking is I presume you have a commercial tax rate, you know what the project cost, how much do you have to generate of a tax base to make that \$96 million, it's a very simple question, I'm sure your Finance Officer could answer it.

Mr. Charpentier replied the answer to the question is \$100 million, if we recover \$100 million of that \$1 billion over the 30 years we will then recover the money that is put into this project. And, again while I have the microphone, Mr. Chairman, part of the answer to Alderman Shea's question if you look in the package of slides that have been shown that first night in the "Source and Use of Funds" one of the items of income is approximately \$1.7 million of interest. Once the City issues the bonds and the money is collected that \$44 million in bond money will sit in a bank account somewhere earning interest. So, over the period before it's expended, the City will collect \$1.7 million in interest and that's really the difference roughly between your \$57 and \$59 million. There was an earlier question on demographics, some asked if the City had done demographic studies. There have been several demographic studies...among them the Hunter Study, one done by Dr. Englund and the Whittemore School and, of course, all of the businesses that are interested in participating in this civic center have done their own study - Ogden and others. As far as Enron's tax rate...the maximum corporate tax rate in the country currently is 34 percent. I'm assuming that Enron's annual profit is more than \$335,000 so, therefore, they pay 34 percent to the federal government. What was not said is don't forget they pay the various state's governments and because New Hampshire does have a so-called Business Profits Tax, Enron will pay the seven percent New Hampshire Business Profits Tax and should they have a loss from this operation which I doubt, they still would have the opportunity to pay the New Hampshire Business Enterprise Tax. Remember, we do have that tax also.

Leo Gove, 144 Kenberma Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I've only lived in this City 52 years, however, I'm not in favor of a civic center if it involves one nickel of municipal funds or the City ever becomes liable for any future maintenance to this facility. Thank you.

Andy Jackson, 199 Westwood Drive, Manchester, NH, stated:

Many things have been said tonight and I'm not going to dwell too much on them, but there are a couple of little points I would like to cover. I would also like to comment on Mrs. Domaigne who made some very good points. Even Al Hebert, I'd like to comment he made some good points as did Alderman Shea. Quite honestly, I'd be happy to see a civic center built in this City. I think it would be a wonderful thing, but at 80 percent of taxpayers money, I have news for you. I'm highly opposed to it. Particularly, I'd like to see this on the ballot as a referendum. I do think the people of this City should have the courtesy of voting on that and also instead of weasel wording it I'd like to see it put in to words that could be understood by the people, that's an important point because quite often their weasel worded so that people vote negatively for something they don't know what they're voting for. An awful lot more planning should be done on this - the parking for one thing. This is absolutely asinine. People are willing to be bused. I've got news for you. This is a politician or bureaucratic opinion. Somebody who has a special interest is trying to sell a point, people are not that stupid and you know it. Look at all the other places. Looking up on the board here a little while ago, it was looking kind of funny...absolutely no property tax used for this. But, 80 percent of it is funded by guess what - the Rooms & Meals Tax. What is that, is that a tax, is that a tax. It is to me. It's our money, it's taxpayers - all of us. It's not money from a tree, it's not from Willy's group in Washington, it's from these taxpayers, it's their money, they should spend it for other things perhaps. But, again, I would like to see this built, it would be nice, but be real...not at the taxpayers expense. Thank you.

Walter Stiles, 226 Sagamore Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I have lived there since 1922, just about the 1st of November, 1922. I was born 2 1/2 blocks away from that location, my mother wheeled a baby carriage from Cameron's Hospital to 226 and I've been there ever since. So, it's a good spot, I like and if it ain't broke I'm not going to fix it. Now, it's good to see that there are people capable in this auditorium that can speak longer than five minutes because I've been capable of doing that too. But, I'm not going to speak five minutes tonight and I want to preface my remarks by saying try walking ladies and gentlemen. There's nothing like walking. If you don't use it, you lose it and I love to walk from my home right down to City Hall, it's a great walk and a lot of fun and you see and meet a lot of people. Now, this weekend I had the opportunity to go to Quantico, Virginia, the Marine base at Quantico and also to the Marine Barracks in Washington, DC and I tell you I'm all revved up tonight because I almost reenlisted and it was actually 54 years ago this August that I was asked when I was out in the South Pacific...there were two guys in my outfit and they

said we'd like...the Sgt. Major said there are two people and you're one of them and we'd like to have you go back to Quantico to go to OCS at Quantico. Well, I didn't go because we could either go or not go but I finally made it 54 years later. Well, it was a wonderful experience watching the Marines, they gung ho, it's a great organization, and I'm as I say on a high. Okay, let's look at the City of Manchester here. We have many, many positive things going on for us. I don't have to say anything about the Airport, we all know about the Airport, it's growing by leaps and bounds and it's bringing a lot of revenue into the City of Manchester. We not only see the Airport growing, we're also seeing a revitalization of Elm Street here in Manchester and somebody was kind enough to mention we're seeing the restoration/renovation of the City Hall; that happens to be the project that is very dear to my heart. It's been a long haul, but it's all under construction, ladies and gentlemen, and you will be proud of it when it is completed. Now, one of the things...years ago there used to be a show called the "Groucho Marx Show" and it was an old man a hundred years old on the show and Groucho asked him "well, what do you attribute your long life to anyway". So, the old guy got very serious and said...well, of course, they thought he didn't drink or smoke or whatever it may be, but he got very serious and said when I wake up in the morning I have two choices. I have a choice to be happy or I have a choice to be sad and he said I always chose to be happy. When I wake up in the morning, I have two choices. I have a choice to be positive or a choice to be negative. I try to wake up and be positive and forward looking. Now, let me say this to you, ladies and gentlemen, that we have...I went to Straw School here in the City of Manchester and we learned a lot of basic things about life here and my class model happened to be the world is full of the possible, but you've got to fight to win it and that goes for anything in this life. Whether it's the City Hall or the Airport or whether it's the civic center or whatever it may be, so you're going to have to fight to win it. Well, let's fight and let's be positive about it and look at Manchester being the City that pulled itself up by its bootstraps. When the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company closed their doors in 1935, December 24th and that was it. It was the pits of the City of Manchester. I was around then, but here we are going full-speed ahead. We had the '36 flood, we had the '38 hurricane, we had World War II, we had all kinds of things. But, anyway we have recovered and we're moving full scale ahead and I will say one thing to you, ladies and gentlemen, while doubt stands still confidence can build skyscrapers. I didn't invent that saying, but I think everybody ought to know it...while doubt stands still, confidence can build skyscrapers. Manchester is a unique City, it isn't like a lot of these other cities, it's a very unique City. It's a historical City, study your history and use the power of positive thinking. Thank you.

Tom Schwieger, 24 Charles Chase Way, Manchester, NH, stated:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I've been a resident of the City for 15 1/2 years. I'd like to compliment Skip Ashooh and Ray Pinard and Dick Charpentier and John Snow for their outstanding work and for you gentlemen of taking the time for these hearings. Most of my remarks are personal ones, but I do want to put my business hat on for a moment. Parking and traffic has come up several times as a key issue. We think that it is a key issue and we do whatever we can as an organization to facilitate with the residents in the area and the businesses in the area to attack those problems. They are not insurmountable, they've been resolved in many other cities of similar size with similar situations and they are not that difficult. The other thing I'd like to mention quickly is that according to the sales and management marketing survey of buying power. In all of the years that I've been here when they ranked 350 statistical metropolitan areas...Hillsborough County, New Hampshire has never ranked lower than 30 in effective buying income per household. So, there is a very lucrative market here. I'm going to make a few statements and I'd like Skip Ashooh or others to correct me if some of these are wrong, when I'm done with my comments. But, just to get everything in line, in order from someone that's sat through all of these meetings. First of all, there will be no line item in the City budget for the civic center that would directly impact the property tax rate on my property thus increasing my property tax. When approved by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen then the following must happen. One, the cost of the project including land acquisition, design construction (with guarantees) must be within the budget, no cost overruns. There must be a long-term lease signed by Ogden, there must be no operating losses (guaranteed) signed by Ogden, there must be an American Hockey League team in place, and we must have obtained a bond insurance. Unless all of this is in place there is no deal, no obligation to proceed; that is my understanding plus a minimum of 20 percent private capital...a pretty good deal. One speaker at the first meeting said that the Rooms & Meals Tax depends on the economy and that's true. If the economy weakens and tax revenues are short then it's my understanding the bond insurance takes over and pays the difference. Now, those are the things I'd like some responses to. So, my observations to and some information that I've been able to come up with recently...the Target Center recently built in Minneapolis, Minnesota opened in 1994. Since then, in four years, the average increase in property values is in excess of 20 percent within a five or six block range. Now, the rest of the figures I'm giving I'm taking a very, very conservative view of it. The Intown Manchester district, the district it serves has a valuation of \$280 million, at a 20 percent increase...a \$66 million in increased taxable property, only in four or five years and we expect it to grow from that, that times our tax rate is \$1.8 million per year...over 25 years that's \$45 million in new taxes during the life of the bonds and

that will continue well on after that. Even half of that is significant. Ogden conservatively will have 25 new jobs, not a lot you say. But, at a conservative \$20,000 a year that's \$500,000 a year in payroll, \$15 million in payroll over the 30-year life of the bonds and those jobs will continue beyond that plus the \$20 million plus in construction wages. Those figures add up to \$80 million of economic activity during the life of the bonds and even if I'm off 20 percent, it's still \$64 million not counting the spinoff jobs created by suppliers, new businesses in the area, etc. Even a hundred of those jobs would be another 40, 50, 60 million dollars of wages paid during the life of the bonds...we're now well in excess of \$100 million. Another comment about the Target Center. Crime has decreased in the area around the Target Center. A metro crime specialist stated that "generally, areas with large numbers of people engaged in these types of activities are more likely to be safer than deserted areas". Recently, I had a chance to become very acquainted with Peoria, Illinois for a completely different reason...town of 113,000, a metro area the size of ours, an arena just slightly smaller than ours...

Alderman Rivard interjected could you please wrap it up.

Mr. Schwieger continued by stating Bradley University, truck tractor pulls, Rugrats coming in September, an all breeds cat show, water fowl festival, I don't call those rowdy crowds.

Alderman Rivard stated thank you.

Mr. Schwieger stated you bet...99 performances in 16 years, Aldermen, came from six different entertainment venues. This thing will succeed, please support it.

Jonathan Simard, 55 Oak Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

There's a couple of things I'd like to speak to...much of what I had to say tonight has already been mentioned. But, first, I'd like to speak to the people that are passionate about it and concerned about the effect it's liable to have on the community and their concern for supporting it. I have the good fortune for working for a national company and our concerns are State taxes and local taxes such as property taxes for manufacturers and businesses and I travel around the United States and see a lot of different companies and we oftentimes will help them consider where they may place a company. This project here before us is an important piece of that puzzle. Along with the Airport which is probably the biggest piece this project is one more incremental part of the puzzle that will make an attractive community for businesses to come and join Manchester. Right now, we may have been voted Number 1, but having lived here 10 years and come from

outside, I personally believe we only have the potential of being Number 1, we're not Number 1 yet. You just need to go out to some of these other cities and see what they have offered and what they do. If we want to sustain that or go beyond that projects like this have to move forward. For a company to come here they're looking for an educated workforce, they're looking for things for their employees to do in the community, and they're also looking for transportation such as we've offered by 101 and 93 and the Airport. This piece will allow them to come and have conventions and businesses and to also look for plenty of educational opportunities for their families and employees. One example of where we fell short by not having it is US FIRST was started and now it's called FIRST that promotes education, that couldn't even hold it in their own City. Now the National's are held at Epcot Center in Florida and we would be able to bring back at least the regional competition here to Manchester where it first started. So, in fact, with the advent of companies coming to the community, offering higher paying jobs, education, those jobs will be there for those people that are concerned about their own incomes and in addition those businesses will pay property taxes which will further lower the tax rate. It's the only way to really help our schools and help get tax relief. I think it's been said in many ways and it's sometimes a complex issue, but simply by doing this will help us move forward. I've had people that have worked with me and tenants in this community that have moved out of this City to go raise their families elsewhere because those things weren't here and this community will continue to erode unless it does. Secondly, what I'd like to speak to is the architects and that they take a couple of things into consideration. One of those is as much as our history is very important here it is only a small point in time over the hundreds of years that this piece of land has been on the river and today it's gone and become a community that has over 30 languages spoken in this City and if we're going to inherit from Ogden a facility in 30 years, it's probably going to be a very different City then. So, we've gone from a City of immigrants and French and Greeks and Italians to now immigrants that include people from the Pacific, from Mexico, from all over the Equator...it's 30 languages now, the center should reflect that when they build it and that alone as I say would be meeting what we have today, we're still going to be very different and hopefully a vibrant community in 30 years from now. The other thing that I ask is that this is a college town and nobody would ever know it. There's seven colleges and universities here and I think again they can contribute much to this center, but also again should be reflected in it. The last thing is the arts. When I first moved here in looking around I found that the Currier Art Gallery is one of the best galleries outside of Boston. From an education standpoint the best business library out of Harvard in Boston is at New Hampshire College. These things here make it worthwhile, but again we need a total package to make an attractive place to live and to grow. So, I'd just like to pass that on and hope that

it will all be taken care into consideration and I'd like to thank the Aldermen and the Committee involved for having this kind of dialogue so people could speak. It's also with this kind of project...although it's one of the biggest, the first time here I've seen that kind of public dialogue, so even those that are for it, against it maybe can come forth and I'd like to congratulate you and thank you.

Tammy Simmons, 142 Parker Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'd just like to be one of those people who grew up near a town that built a civic center, I'm originally from upstate New York near Albany and when they first built the civic center there were a lot of people who weren't too sure about it and at first they couldn't fill the stadium, nobody wanted to go see the hockey games, but now Pepsi owns the arena, they no doubt paid them very well to purchase it, and they have hockey, they have arena football, they have concerts, they have trade shows, who knows what else. I go to a Home Show here in Manchester and it's like this is it, I get this one little room with a hundred vendors in it. I could spend two whole days in Albany at a trade show and you people that just don't have the foresight to look and see that we're a positive community and that we have the capability to do this and we have to grow. History's a great thing and I'm all for it, but if we don't move forward we're just going to die out and be another New England town that fell by the wind. You have to be positive. These people wouldn't be working so hard if they really thought that they were trying to slip one in...everybody's got this negativity and I really think that you all just need to chill out a little and let them do their job and everything will work out fine, thanks.

Bill Simmons, 142 Parker Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm her other half. I also come from upstate New York and people are complaining about education, correct me if I'm wrong, but the education on my tax money owning a house on the west side of Manchester is roughly 52 percent. I don't think these people are asking for a real heck of a lot. On the other hand, not only Albany but Glens Falls, New York which is a heck of a lot smaller than Albany and a lot smaller than the Manchester area also supports another hockey team up there and a lot of other venues. So, if they can do it, I'm sure we can.

Bonnie St. Jean, 100 Gilhaven Road, Manchester, NH, stated:

First, I'd like to thank Skip and all the Committee and the Aldermen for hearing us tonight. I would like to recommend to the sub-committee of the Aldermen that they recommend to the committee tomorrow night the approval to forward and to take this to the voters in November. The reason I urge you, encourage you to do that is that we don't have any regrets. If you look back at the history of Manchester and I've lived here for 29 years and some historical points...have you

ever heard some people say we regret the fact that Jordan Marsh to move to Bedford, do we regret that we allowed some of the Manchester businesses that were in the inner-city or Downtown that we allowed them to move out and we didn't work to try and save them so that they could stay in Downtown Manchester. The City has done a lot to try to turn things around, to rebuild the Millyard section, to rebuild Downtown, to rebuild the Enterprise community. But, do we really want to have to work twice-as-hard because I think that the civic center brings a lot of opportunities to Manchester and to Greater Manchester and to the State. For, if we do not bring the civic center to Manchester someone else will and will that be another regret.

Elizabeth LaRocca, 110 Northbrook Drive, Manchester, NH, stated:

I've been in Manchester for 18 years and I love this City and I appreciate the form and I thank you, Aldermen, for letting us speak and I also thank the Committee and Skip for all of your efforts. I have to tell you I was on the fence after hearing John Mongan speak to the Manchester Kiwanis Club about four years ago, he made some compelling remarks that I thought were really something to worry about and something to consider, but after hearing all of the thoughtful debate from the previous meetings I am now for this 100 percent. For the same reasons that most of the people have indicated, the Committee's indicated namely the redevelopment of our lovely City. Secondly, tax base increase...I really think it will increase our tax base for all the reasons that so many more eloquent people have stated and thirdly, quality of life. It pains me, I grew up in the Seacoast in Newmarket and I saw lovely Manchester just falling apart since I've moved here 18 years ago while Portsmouth has been able to grow, what is the key, what is the difference...quality of life and image. Manchester has a poor image and I do believe the civic center will be a draw and will help all of the merchants that have had the loyalty to stay Downtown and I think also that Manchester's on a roll due to the efforts of people like you, Intown Management people, the Chamber leaders, and I think we need something of this magnitude, however, to push us over the top. We're kind of hanging there and we need to push us over the top and I do believe if we let this go we'll probably be looking back and watching Concord or Nashua take that and it would pain me as a resident of 18 years to see that happen. Thank you for your attention.

John White, 81 Alpine Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm like some of the others here, I'm not going to tell you how old I am or how long I've lived in this City, but I did work for the City for 37 years, so I do have some interest in what's happening. I'd just like to preface my remarks with a quote from a column by Peter Gammons, Peter who writes for *The Boston Globe* and who appears on ESPN Baseball Tonight as a baseball expert and perhaps one of the outstanding baseball writers who understands baseball finance also. He was talking about a conflict out in Milwaukee between Milwaukee and the State of Wisconsin and the owners of the Brewers concerning a new stadium and his remark and I noted this a couple of years ago...when you hear about the need for public financing of stadiums remember the Cleveland schools are in receivership. Cleveland built Jacobs Field, Cleveland won the American League Championship and following that the State of Ohio or the commonwealth had to step in and operate the Cleveland schools because they didn't have enough money from the City of Cleveland to operate. You know, I noted in one of the experts testimony here that of the 254 communities in the State of New Hampshire that 253 had put the money from the Meals & Rooms, the so-called excess money into their general funds. Are they all out of step but us. I don't know. Why are you putting away this money for a special purpose. Do you do that with any other monies that come from the State, how about Foundation Aid...you get three, four million dollars...does that go specifically for education or does it go into the general fund. How about the tuition monies from all the towns around here, what's that come to...eight, ten million dollars...where does that go. Does it go directly to the School Department so that they can use it, no it goes into the general fund. You don't even credit them for it in their budget...their budget what, \$63 million, but how much money do they generate. So, you're really only shelling out \$50 million for schools, so I guess you can tell that I was a colleague of Alderman Shea. I was also a contrare of Henry McLaughlin for whom this new school, brand new, built to open in a couple of days and it can't be opened fully. Why? Because there wasn't enough money appropriate to the School Department to staff that school. Now, you can stick this money away, but you can't put enough money out to open a brand new school. Something is a little strange. Another fellow that spoke here, a Mr. Stern I believe mentioned how this facility was to be paid for and he started out with the Year 2000, I think like \$1.3 million then going up each year \$1.5, \$1.7, and so on until by the Year 2009, 2010 there would be about \$20 million. Well, \$20 million that you're going to throw into paying for this thing then for the next 19 years \$3.7 million a year going to pay for this facility. Well, you total that up \$3.7 times 19 is about \$70 million plus the \$20 million...you're over \$90 million, and where is it. How about everything else in town. Couldn't you use...oh no, you're shutting me off...

Alderman Rivard stated thank you very much.

Mr. White continued by stating no way have I been five minutes. Well, I'm staying here. I'd just like to point out to you a few things.

Alderman Rivard stated you've already done that.

Mr. White stated well, I'm going to do some more. When the Boston Garden was being built for the Bruins and Celtics some money from the City of Boston was used to pay for road improvements, but the vast majority of development dollars came from the private sector. In fact, the developer Jacobs Delaware North had to pay the City \$20 million for the air rights over the Fleet Center and if you think that the hockey is going to help, hockey is no help to Rhode Island Center, they lost money down there, they had a \$600,000 deficit, the hockey team brings in less money than concerts. Concerts go to where...Worcester, Boston, Albany...to those facilities and yet this is a 13,000 seat facility.

Alderman Rivard asked, John, are you going to give somebody else a chance to speak tonight.

Mr. White stated I'm sorry it's this late, but I timed myself and it hasn't been, it wasn't five minutes, Alderman. Okay, here's one other item and this is '98, this is current from Providence. Already beset by high operating costs and other maladies officials says the Providence Civic Center home of the Providence Bruins hockey team and of the Providence College basketball team needs at least \$2 million in repairs. The City and Ogden Entertainment the private firm that manages the civic center hope to borrow \$2 million to start the building's facelift. Declining revenues and rising costs have kept the civic center in the red since 1991, so that's factual from the...

Mr. Ashooh stated, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to respond to that. Mr. White is correct in quoting that article about the Providence Civic Center losing money on hockey games and that is a budget decision by the City of Providence. They know they lose about \$7,000 on a hockey game, that is part of their loss leader, but the facility itself actually has had one of its best years since Ogden Entertainment came in and the \$2 million worth of improvements that were brought in were part of an RFP process that all the new managers for the first time in the 25 years of that facility, the City of Providence decided to have the building managed properly...they had a national search...brought in seven companies...Ogden and the other six companies were told that part of the process would be that the City of Providence would

furnish them with \$2 million in upgrades. You're talking about a building that the City ran for 25 years that had plywood filling the glass in the windows, masking tape using it to hold the handles on the doors because the city of Providence did nothing to upgrade that building. In order to get a manager in, the City of Providence offered to bond \$2 million...Ogden has asked for now to do the improvements in the building, that's a fact.

Al L'Heureux, Pennacook Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

The nice thing about being one of the last speakers, I can leave my five sheets of financial statistics on the chair and not bring anything else up here. As President of the Federation of Musicians there's no question about it that I am very much in favor of the civic center because they're going to hire musicians and they're going to build hotels and hotels are going to have lounges and lounges are going to have musicians. So, it's really in our interest to see the civic center come up. But, somebody said well, this isn't the right time we haven't got the money, we won't be able to do it, and so forth. Well, I've been living in Manchester for a long time, half all my life and I remember at one point in the City when we did nothing. We built no schools, we hardly repaired the schools that were existing, we didn't build anything because we wanted to keep the tax rate down and we did. But, what happened. There came a day of reckoning and when that day of reckoning came we got walloped with that terrific tax increase, I remember that very well and I'm sure some of you that have been on the Board for a long, long time remember that Mayor that kept everything down was popular, but nothing got done. There's never a right time to do anything. If you don't extend yourself at some point...you extended yourself to get a new car at some point in your life, you extended yourself to get a new house...there's never a right time to do something, but I think this is the right time to do is because if we don't do it now, we won't do it next year, we won't do it the year after and the year after that and somebody else is going to do it in our neighborhood and then we're going to kick ourselves in the butt because we didn't do it when we should have done it. So, I'm really in favor of having this civic center built, I think it's going to be a great asset to the City of Manchester, it may even fill the lot on the corner of Bridge and Elm, probably a hotel or something might go there. But, I really think it's necessary to bring the Downtown up, increase the tax base, and eventually lower your property taxes. I think that it's a great opportunity and I don't think we should pass it by; that's all I have to say.

Bob Dastin, 2600 Elm Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

First of all, let me add my congratulations to Skip Ashooh and Dick Charpentier, Ray Pinard, and our dearly departed John Snow for all the work that they've done with this. Having done a little bit of it myself in the past, I certainly know how much time and effort that it takes, so the City owes you a great debt of gratitude. Thank you for what you've done. I'm not going to stand here and reiterate all the reasons why, you know the reason why. My dear friend Jackie Domaingue if she thinks this is all about entertainment Jackie ain't got it right. This is not entertainment, folks, this is economic development, pure and simple economic development. Let me see if I can answer a couple of questions that seem to be floating around. One is that - why do we need public support. In the research that I've done over the course of the last four years in the development of civic centers and talking to a whole score of developers there is no city in this country, I'm told, of comparable size that has not had substantial public support for the construction of a civic center. Now, we can debate forever whether that public support ought to be 60 percent or 70 percent or 80 percent. The fact of the matter is that we've got 20 percent of private support. Do you want to hold one for another two or three years to see if we can raise that to 30 percent or 40 percent, I don't think so, I don't think so. Even the Fleet Center, a privately-owned and financed facility relied heavily upon the City of Boston to do all of the infrastructure at tens of millions of dollars in order to accommodate the Fleet Center, number one. Number two, there seems to be this idea that when the Legislature in the 93/94 legislative session passed the bill to give the increments of Rooms & Meals Tax back to the cities and towns of this State, but that was somehow designated either for education or to reduce the tax rate. Now, when I was involved in this CenterPlex thing several years ago, I did the legislative history and the study of what happened in '93 and '94 and but for some brief remarks by Senator John King at that time about his desire that those incremental funds be used to reduce taxes that was certainly not part of the law, it was never in the law and there is very little legislative history about how the monies are going to be used and your interpretation of and your setting aside of the funds to build a civic center is appropriate. Let me finish up by taking you back a couple of years...four years ago when I led a group of people to try to bring a civic center to the community and tell you some things that you have before you tonight that you didn't have back then. Remember that New Hampshire is not a "Home Rule" State, so anything authority that a municipality desires that isn't in the statutes they have to go to the Legislature and that's what we had to do. We had to go to the Legislature in 1995 and 1996 to get them to approve bonds to build a civic center and the way we thought we were going to do it back then was to have the Legislature guarantee that the City of Manchester would have enough money with which to pay the bonds as they came due. Quite

frankly, we lost on that issue. We lost on two different occasions. We don't have that. Representative David Mittelman had the law changed so that municipalities now can issue bonds without having to go to the State. We have no guarantee from the operating company that there would be no losses borne by the taxpayers, we had no locally-owned hockey club, we had no private financing, quite frankly. We had no \$11 million that this team of people had put together. There are a lot of things lacking two or three years ago that are not lacking in this proposal. Finally, let me say and I encourage you, urge you tomorrow night vote on this thing as a Board of Aldermen, you didn't have to send the issuance of bonds for the building of an Airport to a referendum and this doesn't need a referendum. Thank you.

Jeffrey Gamache, 259 Cedar Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

Well, I think it's great that you're going to build a civic center, but there's a down side to it. If there's going to be a civic center the traffic's going to be bad and if people have to get gas they have to get by plus the retired people in the retirement homes will be pretty upset and I think they should just have peace and no partying after the games and stuff. I think it's really great, but in that area...I think it's not good to be in the area because of the crime and stuff. I think it should be somewhere else where there's not as much crime as there is here. Thank you.

Billy Dodd, 181 Mammoth Road, Manchester, NH, stated:

On one hand I'm all in favor of the civic center and for what it can do for the City of Manchester. On the other hand, I see this kind of as a disservice to the people. I see it as a pro civic center rally. These people up here are the ones that are answering all the questions from the people out here. You guys, I think, should already have the information that they have and you should be giving the information out. You're the ones that are going to have to vote on this tomorrow night, okay, so you guys should be answering the questions. These guys should be coming in only if you don't have the answers, okay. From what I've been listening to tonight you only have two major corporations that are contributing funding to this. The two corporations that are going to be providing services and managing the civic center...if I assume everything correctly they're all going to be making a pretty substantial profit on this and they've got all their numbers figured out as to what they're going to make. My question is, what is the City going to make on this as a profit. At some point, you're going to be seeing the Governor tying the civic center to the regional growth of the area and to the Airport. Now, if this is going to happen how come you guys aren't approaching the Governor for some money to go along with this. They're talking about they don't know what the final design is going to be of the building. There's some talk about parking, okay. There's talk about losing historic buildings. Why don't you move this

thing...if you don't have an exact site to put this on and you're free to move it, put this thing down in the Millyard District and incorporate some buildings in the Millyard District that you're not going to tear down and build your civic center down there, you've got plenty parking around. You also have the Staples lot for additional parking which once you build on it is gone. I was watching this on public TV the other day and the President of St. A's was all up in arms for this thing, it's a great thing. Ask your colleges around the area, donate some money to the building of the civic center, it's going to enhance your national recognition. The civic center, the way I look at it is based...it's a go or no go proposition based on a hockey team. Is this hockey team going to sign a 30-year lease and somehow guarantee the funds are going to be there if they pull out and go somewhere else or are they only there for a year or two. There's been a lot of talk about the Rooms & Meals Tax money, is it dedicated money for property tax relief, if it is then you guys have to decide if what you're doing is the right thing. O think 20 percent private funding and from what I understand they're going to reap all of the profits from this building and we're going to guarantee 80 percent of it...that's not a very good deal. I'd like to come up with a business idea that has somebody finance 80 percent for me and let me keep all of the money, that would be a pretty good deal then. I think you ought to put this thing to a vote, a referendum. But, I think it needs to say more than what the question you put out. The last referendum that I voted for on the City Charter and no where on that ballot form did I knowingly vote a substantial pay raise for the Mayor, but later on when I read what I actually voted for that is what I did vote for. So, I think if you're going to put this thing on the ballot you need to have it say exactly, up front, what's it's going to be. All the profits if they're going to go to the private investors for this building, it should say right on it...all the profits will go back to the private investors. Parking...Mr. Ashooh said that parking is a symbol of growth. When you're going to have parking as a symbol of growth, you're going to have traffic. Based on that one fact alone and nothing else, if you guys act on past practice you have to vote the civic center down because up on Mammoth Road you had another grocery store that wanted to come in and one of the main concerns that you guys used for not giving them the go ahead was increased traffic on Mammoth Road. I also went to that hearing and I heard the comment made that competition was bad. But, yet you've got two opposing drug stores right across the street from one another. So, if you're going to use traffic to kill that one up there and you're doing the same thing down here then you've got to use traffic again. You guys represent the people, listen to what people have to say when they go to the polls and vote. Thank you.

Glenn Ouellette, 1470 Elm Street #33, Manchester, NH, stated:

First, let me state that I'm in favor of building the civic center. If we are to have meaningful community development Downtown then Manchester must make an effort to offer industry and its people the community of cultural activities. The Downtown cannot develop economically without first the City offering people a reason for coming Downtown. Further community developments in the form of the civic center means a need for more hotel rooms, restaurants, mini-malls, office buildings, and of course not to exclude Downtown housing high-rises. In all these buildings, these new buildings would be paying property taxes. This is the whole idea of having the civic center. I have a few questions that I would like to have the gentleman at the end answer. Some of these questions have been answered so I am not going to repeat them. My first question is will the amount of up to \$1 million paid by private corporate investors to have the civic center named be part of the 20 percent considered in private investment or is this money to be spent separately. This came from a newspaper article sometime this year.

Mr. Ashooh stated if you want to ask all of the questions, you can stand and I'll run through each of them or do you want me to answer them separately.

Mr. Ouellette replied I'd rather you answered them individually.

Mr. Ashooh stated the naming rights in this proposal...once upon a time we were talking about naming rights that the City would have to go out and sell and bear the risk of selling those naming rights. Under the deal that we have with Ogden and Enron at this point all the revenues including naming rights would go to Ogden and Enron in return for them accepting all the risks and making the capital investment of \$11.5 million in the building. Naming rights according to our marketing test seemed to have a potential annual revenue of about \$200,000 a year, possibly more.

Mr. Ouellette stated so you're saying that if a corporation gives the entertainment company a million dollars to have the center named by them it goes to them and not to the City.

Mr. Ashooh replied that is correct.

Mr. Ouellette stated question number two you've answered. Question number three -- does the City plan to build a below the ground two-story parking garage for the civic center building to sit aloft at street level because I believe that the Center of New Hampshire is not going to be plenty of parking.

Mr. Ashooh replied the answer is no and the simple reason for that is the cost of building any kind of structured parking is just phenomenal, you're talking about approximately \$15,000 a parking space and that would really take just any project and make it very, very expensive.

Mr. Ouellette asked so is your alternative for people to park in the neighborhood back streets.

Mr. Ashooh replied if you...not so much the neighborhood back streets, but the City of Manchester controls 10,000 parking spaces from the Pearl Street parking Lot down to approximately Auburn Street. If a hundred percent of the people that attended an event at the civic center...it was a sellout for hockey, everybody who got there drove we'd need about 3,000 spaces, but I think it's reasonable to assume some people will walk, some people will take the bus, some people will live in the area and are in walking distance. So, the maximum we'd need is approximately 3,000 spaces and those spaces are readily available.

Mr. Ouellette commented if it's the middle of winter and I have to park on Orange Street and walk to Lake, I don't think I'll walk that far.

Mr. Ashooh stated I probably agree with you and I think the MTA is already working on warm shuttle buses.

Mr. Ouellette stated I guess question four is out of the question because you wouldn't consider the parking garage. Question five - would the entertainment company also get and receive the City's parking revenues at the City-owned Center of New Hampshire Parking Garage and if so, who would pay for the continued needed improvements down the road, the City or the entertainment center.

Mr. Ashooh asked the improvements in the parking garages.

Mr. Ouellette stated the one at the civic center, will they get the revenues and if they do will they be paying for the improvements down the road.

Mr. Ashooh replied if you take a look at what you're proposing right now we have a number of parking garages and surface lots in Downtown Manchester that after five o'clock are unused, usually locked up from the second floor up because no one is in those garages. So, to part of your answer, yes. This building manager has asked for as part of the negotiation a number of controlled parking spaces...that revenue would flow to the building.

Mr. Ouellette asked who would upgrade that, the need to repair the parking garages when it comes time, the entertainment company or the City of Manchester.

Mr. Ashooh replied most of our proposal is based on the negotiation of the maintenance budget, repair and reserve budget built into that contract. What happens with the City garages frankly, I'm not sure because that again is a negotiated item. I can't give you an absolute on that at this point.

Mr. Ouellette stated I think the public should know some of these answers, where their money is going to be going...if they're giving it to somebody else and we're going to be using taxpayers money to fix up the garages.

Alderman Rivard stated you're time has run out.

Mr. Ouellette stated one more question. How does the City plan, in an orderly way, sufficient highway lanes to and from I-293, Exits 4, 5, and 6 and will they consider asking the State of New Hampshire to help to improve the expansions of these exits.

Mr. Ashooh replied the master plan currently has on it provisions for on-ramps and off-ramps at Granite Street, but you also have sufficient surface arteries now that can carry traffic to and from the proposed site.

Mr. Ouellette stated I have one more question, please.

Alderman Rivard stated make it quick.

Mr. Ouellette asked would the City allow a major hotel chain to locate a hotel on Elm Street connecting to the civic center by way of an overpass on Spruce Street and would the City allow other hotel mall related developments with underground parking garages between Queen City Avenue, Lake Avenue, Granite Street along Elm Street.

Mr. Ashooh replied that I couldn't tell you. We're talking about a civic center in Staples not on Queen City Avenue.

Mr. Ouellette stated but we're talking about community development beyond the civic center which will pay for the civic center.

Mr. Ashooh stated I'm assuming that the City would look at everything, but that's not in the scope of our project.

Mr. Ouellette stated but, so far the City is not in favor of parking garages, I hear.

Mr. Ashooh replied they are not in favor of the cost. One last comment, on the revenues of the parking garages and naming rights going to the building manager, there is a provision for sharing of excess revenues of the facility with the City of Manchester.

John Gross, 421 Medford Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I also am President of a business that's Downtown and employs about 20 employees. It kind of puts me in an interesting situation because I have the Downtown people rallying me to support this with all kinds of information and there are various other groups that have a lot of questions that I've heard tonight. So, I really have probably more questions than real concepts that have been formulated and that's why I'm here, that's why you're having this happen. The first problem that is a real problem to us and again we're a small business so in the whole scheme of things it probably doesn't mean a whole heck of a lot to a development committee is most of my employees rent parking spaces Downtown in private lots and they're paying between \$45 and \$55 a month. Now, if I'm a lot owner I am going to want those people out of there by five o'clock because there's event parking and I'm going to get three bucks or five bucks or ten bucks. We're open until nine o'clock at night. Now, we're one of the businesses that are open until nine o'clock at night, so for us we're going to have trouble. We are going to have customers that are going to want to pick up their products and not going to be able to get in because there's an event Downtown. But, I'm being assured that's going to be taken care of, so okay, I'm putting that on record now just in case it comes to that. We went to diagonal parking because there's a parking problem Downtown even with reduced business and we had the business spaces come down and went to diagonal parking to increase business parking Downtown. So, I think parking is going to be a bigger problem than you think. Now, I supported the two million City investment and the yet to come to fruition Science Center, I supported the building of the multi-million dollar Middle School even though it hasn't been

opened yet and I have...and part of me really wants to support the civic center, but not without thinking through some of what goes on. People are talking about the fact that they went to Worcester and they spent \$20.00 on parking and \$4.00 on a hamburger and \$20.00 on a ticket and I think to myself...I've done that, we've all driven to The Centrum, to the Fleet Center. But, I can't think of one non restaurant, non hotel that's in that area...Legal's is there if I don't think they went out of business and there was a Chinese restaurant down the street, but I never went into a McQuade's type department store. I never went into Victorian Jewelers in Worcester to buy something. I drove in, went to the event, and left. So, my question is what revenue stream is the City going to get from the person who does exactly that and you might have the answers to that. Is there a tax per ticket so I can at least say that when 10,000 people come in and they're coming from Massachusetts we're going to get a piece of that. You're using the 80/20 rule. I'm going to tell you right now you've done a lot of good work, there's a lot of people that want the civic center, I honestly believe if you put an 80/20 referendum to the voters, they're going to vote it down. So, we're at a point now where I don't think the deal is good enough. What I've read is that 80/20 is the investment, but the revenue stream first goes to the people who are managing. So that from dollar one until a certain dollar the City gets no money. How can that be considered a good deal. If I'm sharing 80 percent of the investment capital, forget the risk, but if you're getting 100 percent of the revenue in the beginning what risk is there. If it's an 80/20 investment it should be an 80/20 revenue stream. I'll take the risk if you give me 80 percent of the revenue. Now, the big thing is the bonding and no ones brought that up here. There's supposed to be an insurance program and I guess in the \$57 million budget \$750,000 (and you'll correct me) is to guarantee that the Rooms & Meals Tax and not the property taxes will pay for the civic center. Now, is that firm. We don't build the civic center if we can't land an insurance policy for \$750,000. What if it's three million or five million, do we have an insurance company that has come forward that said they'll bond it for \$750,000 and if they will here's an idea...we build a civic center, we get all the Manchester Delegates to the State to go up there and redirect the Rooms & Meals Tax to another project and the insurance company pays for the civic center, hey we'll even give them the name, we'll name it whatever. So, I have some questions about that...if it's true then it's a good idea. The question that's going to the public, Alderman Wihby, you asked...that it says the word "insured" is in there..."fully insured", is that insured against City default or insured against Rooms & Meals Tax money being redirected. If you could answer that that would be good. Does it say \$57 million, is there a cap in that question.

Alderman Wihby replied it says "issuance of up to \$50 million fully insured bonds..."that is what we're talking about there...to make sure that if we don't have that insurance policy, we don't do the project.

Mr. Gross stated fully insured bonds can mean just insured against City default which all of our bonds would have to be or against the kind of insurance you're talking about which is one what guarantees only Rooms & Meals Taxes will be used. I think that's an important question. We got to be a Number 1 rating without a civic center, just a thought. I'd love to see us have a civic center. For me it's like...I go up to Fitzgerald's once in a while up in Laconia, I don't know if you've been there. I walk through this Dodge Vipers and Ferrari's and stuff and I think this would be great to have. I'd love to have a civic center around here, I question from purely a pragmatic standpoint whether we can afford it. We couldn't afford to open the Middle School, we're a million, two million dollars short, we're that close. It's sort of like my saying I'd love to afford a Viper, but when I look at my budget I've got roads that have got to be fixed. I go to all of these meetings and we never have enough money for anything. We're always told the tax base is down, we don't have money, we don't have this. Can we afford it.

Dean Zottos, 40 Kara Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I was born and raised here and was educated here in Manchester, as well. My family has lived here in Manchester since the 1930's and I have decided to raise my family here as well. Having had the opportunity to spend a lot of time with my grandparents who worked at the Puritan Restaurant on Elm Street for 25 years, I've listened to story after story about how Elm Street was really the heartbeat of the City. Thousands and thousands of people shopping and patronizing local businesses on a daily basis. My wife and I have made the decision, four year ago, to have a business on Elm Street because we know of the potential that Elm Street has, I know how it once was. Currently, people continuously state why are there so many vacant stores on Elm Street. The answer is simple...from a business point of view there has to be a reason for a business to open here. You need an attraction, a draw. When there's a draw you'll immediately see development around it. Development means activity, activity means dollars, dollars mean a healthy economy. This City has to offer its citizens more than a place to sleep, eat, and work. We need to wake up on a Saturday morning and say let's get ready to go to an event in Manchester. Think about it, what big reason is there to stay in Manchester on a weekend other than to plant your mums, spread your bark mulch or go to the mall. This gets monotonous. In closing, I'd like to take this chance to encourage everyone to please support a civic center, so Downtown Manchester can be the thriving place it once was. Thank you.

Ken Rhodes, CLD, 540 Commercial Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

My comments tonight I hope to take a slightly different tact than what you've heard. We've heard all of the details and talked of all of the problems on an item-by-item basis, but I think one of the things that struck me over the weekend as I have thought about and listened to the comments and read of the comments in the paper is a lot of what we've been talking about is change and change in Manchester and the question kind of struck me as whether or not we talked about....hours ago somebody talked about working on a home improvement as your place and can this place accommodate a change or an impact project of this type and I think the answer to that question, in my mind is yes it can. We're not that fragile, we're not that delicate that this place has not taken on change before, accepted it as part of this community, and weaved it into its fabric very, very nicely. Obviously, our Airport currently is the best example locally of how we've been able to do that. Yes, there are issues that this community has had to deal with and will have to deal with because that place has always existed, but there's been a change and overall I think the jury has come in and said that this is something that has been very, very valuable for this place and I think we can do a parallel job. There are other communities that have done the same and I was thinking of Bear Motor Speedway has grown from a motorcycle track into an International Speedway where ten of thousands of people stop by here in this State during the summer and that community has adapted to and has incorporated change and I think we should not fear it, we need to understand what it does, and we need to react to it and one other thought. People are watching and not people in this community, but people everywhere...if we're going to be the City that we say we are and we're proud to put up on the banners that we are a Number 1 city, people are watching how we handle the mantle and handle those responsibilities. They're looking for, I think, in municipalities that understand that is that they can evaluate situations, analyze it, make decisions, make those decisions in a compact, clear method where you can make the hard choices, take the information and put it all together. That speaks to my closing comment although I am a businessman here in the City of Manchester, I'm a resident of the Town of Auburn adjacent to that. I would not have the opportunity to participate as a resident on whether or not you decide on a referendum question. I have an observation for you and it speaks directly to Ms. Domainque's comments earlier. The referendum, I think, has been held. You folks and I trust this process implicitly that brought you here and put you in the decision-making roles. I think we honor that process by giving you folks the authority and giving you folks the responsibility to make these decisions.

If we can't trust this process, if we need shields to go up every time we get down to the tough decisions we are not sending the signals to the community at-large and I mean the big communities (state and nationally) that this town is ready to and has grown up to do business, do the business. Thank you.

Steve McMahon, 268 Ridge Road, Manchester, NH, stated:

I live in Ward 1 and works where Mr. Wihby works. About 30 years ago this Downtown thrived, I grew up in Concord and moved here in 1974, this Downtown thrived. We used to come from Concord to Manchester because it was a magnet, it was called shops, stores, people, activity, a lot of fun...Monday and Thursday nights and weekends. We came here for that reason and then the powers that be made a real momentous decision back about 30 years ago when they said we don't want Jordan Marsh in here and that was the beginning of the end and the Downtown died and yeah we're ranked one in six or whatever we're ranked around the country for this town, but what has happened is we've gotten ranked there for a lot of other reasons, certainly not for our Downtown. The Downtown has been blighted, it's starting to come back...the Aldermen have given Skip and his crew a charge to bring back the Downtown one way or another. Here's a chance for us to put another magnet here. The numbers are something between five hundred and seven hundred and fifty thousand people per year should walk the streets around Downtown, go by all these store fronts, a lot of them closed today...I'll guarantee you they'll open, I'll guarantee you the property values will rise again because that's what will happen. Restaurants will come in, stores will come in and maybe all you people that complain that we don't have enough money for education and I've sent two kids through public school...well, one through public school and one through parochial school in this town and my taxes are very high and I'm very happy with the way this money is used. I think this money is used property. But, I'll tell you if our property tax base Downtown can grow back to where it was as a proportion we won't be complaining at all about the money available for schools because that's how you build infrastructure, that's how you build a tax base that can help a community, not by just grabbing some bucks here or there that isn't reliable necessary in the Rooms & Meals Tax and that's why the insurance on those bonds is so important because if they shut off the Rooms & Meals Tax and we've put it towards schools, we're shut off right there and what are we going to do...raise the tax base to cover it. Let's invest it in capital improvement in this town. Let the tax base increase, let the Downtown improve and we'll get a lot more tax revenue for years and years to come because everyone of us in this room, everyone in this town is paying a higher tax base today because of the decision made by the people who didn't want Jordan Marsh Downtown 30 years ago. Don't let it happen again. Thank you.

Grade Freiji, 114 Hollis Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I, too, would like to thank the Aldermen and especially the committee for all of their hard work and their thoroughness on this project. Twenty-seven years ago I graduated from West High School, 27 years ago we were cruising Elm Street, we were walking Elm Street, and we were driving Elm Street. I think if you ask Christina Borrazas who spoke so well before what is there to do in Manchester she would say nothing, probably cruise Elm Street. So, in 27 years there's not much else to do. I simply want to say as a former School Board Member and a high school teacher of over 18 years that this is not a question, an issue about education versus the civic center. We need to look at where our dollars are being allocated, the dollars that we have for education already. Do not be confused. I am a supporter of the civic center at the proposed site and I would urge the Aldermen to move this proposal forward, you are empowered to do so and I would also encourage you to use that empowerment and not to put this to referendum. Thank you very much.

Mike Flanagan, Manchester, NH, stated:

Well, tonight is a lot better than the first night I spoke when everyone was against it except me, I think. The reason why we can't get more than 20 percent commitment for money and by the way I'm in the entertainment business, so I know a little bit about what's going on up here... is that if you don't have a building you can't ask someone for money and all we're doing here is voting on whether to have a building or not to have a building and we're also discussing and I'm not sure if some people understand what's going on...there's two questions going on here. One, is to ask the Aldermen to vote themselves or for the Aldermen to put this to the public in November. I certainly hope you guys...from what you've listened to approve this and do this yourselves. I just want to read one thing because you've all heard me before anyway. I got this in the mail today. I do a lot of concerts and in Augusta, Maine...22,000 people...in honor of the 25th anniversary of the Augusta Civic Center, the August Board of Trade requests your pleasure, blah, blah, blah, for the recognition dinner to acknowledge the history of the public and private partnership responsible for this economic catalyst" and take a look at the future. This is the economic catalyst, the Augusta Civic Center. By the way, none in New Hampshire, three in Maine. And, this is a story three sentences...early in 1973 a vision for Augusta's future became reality with the opening of the Augusta Civic Center. Maine's finest full service convention and entertainment facility. The dream was shared by a group of individuals from government and business. Five years prior to the opening of the civic center these individuals created the August Board of Trade...which we're going to call the Manchester Development Corporation...an organization dedicated to the expansion

of the community's tax base and to the creation of job opportunities. This gathering is going to be in recognition of a proud past and celebration of present accomplishments with hope that there will be a continued commitment to a bright economic future. What more can I say. They started off just like the Manchester Development Corporation did and 25 years later they're having a big party to celebrate the last 25 years, 21,000 people in town. Vote for it guys, it's a good thing.

George Chappress, 69 Lucille Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm going to start off by crying and moaning and glooming and dooming so you guys who are looking for it will go home empty minded. Oh, and I want a referendum. A few comments first, then I'll do my little dance and sit down in less than five minutes. Entertainment, Jackie Domaingue, the reason I was the only person in the room to put up my hand and get my tap on the head is well, I think I should explain. I raised my hand about my feelings about entertainment because they are building the civic center right next to the cemetery and that's scary, that's why I raised by hand. The talking points which the civic center committee put out about 18 months ago they give answers that all of their folks should give to certain questions. One of the questions that has often been raised they said is don't convention centers lose money. The answer you should give they said was this is not a convention center, it is a civic center. Well, it's not a convention center and it's not a civic center, it's a hockey rink. It's a hockey rink with seats and options, that's all it is. Tomorrow night I'll get into the details of how much money we're actually going to spend, it's going to be over \$100 million over 30 years, I'll explain that tomorrow night. Some property tax talk...a gentleman earlier referred to the 254 communities who received Rooms & Meals money, 253 (all but one) put the Rooms & Meals money into their general fund and of these 253 only 9 realized a reduction of property tax. My goodness. The significant question, one that was not answered is how many of those 253 communities actually intended to reduce their property tax rate. What if say 50 intended and 93 actually reduced, that's more than a hundred percent except those are fake numbers, I just made them up. How many communities attended reduction, we don't know. How many succeed, we don't know. Judicious allocation are the words. Confining the discussion to reduction in property taxes is not right, I think. One minute, that's all I need. Allocation means what do we do with the money, who gets it. Well, the hockey rink don't get it. Maybe the tax rate, maybe the schools, maybe the books, maybe the potholes but not the potbellies. Maybe a slower increase in tax rates,

maybe no increase, maybe reduction, maybe a reduction for senior citizens older than 936 like old Methuselah down on Lake Street, he deserves a break today. Maybe some combination of schools, books, potholes, and tax rates. Who knows. But, no potbellies and no hockey rinks with our money. Thank you.

Paula Borrazas, 459 Central Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I live in Ward 5 and my husband and I own Victorian Jewelers which is located in Downtown Manchester. I believe that Manchester can be a vibrant family-oriented City. I also believe that life is a risk. Those who do not want to take risks do not try to improve themselves, they stay in dead-end job, unfulfilling jobs, and say whoa is me, I have no money, I have no life, no hope. But. those who are willing to take risks, who see problems and try to overcome them make a difference in their lives, their finances, yes and even their lives and the attitudes of their children. Manchester's at a crossroads, this City can choose to take no risks and to climb to proceed with this project and the continual rise of the residential portion of the property tax rate or we can proceed with this project and invest in our future and attract new businesses. The ripple effect of the civic center will be felt throughout the Manchester and its surrounding communities. Manchester can no longer live paycheck to paycheck. It's time to invest in something that will pay dividends and oh, John, by the way it's not the person who is going to come in just for the concert or just for the game and hop on the highway and leave. It's the person who takes a minute to look around and say this is a neat place, I'll come early next time and when they come into my store for the watch battery or just to browse I'll be sure to tell them what a great computer company there is next door.

Richard Borrazas, 459 Central Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I just want to say a few words about some of the things I've heard tonight. If we take a look back at Manchester, at the history of Manchester we find that Amoskeag means a bend in the river where the fishing is good. Well, fishing is no longer good. The mills moved in and invested. We're the mills now. A lot of them are run down, not many are occupied by mills, that's for sure. Banking... where have all the banks gone. Mr. Hebert is a businessman, if he has never reinvested in his business he's not really a businessman. Hold onto history, I don't think so. I think we should make history. This project is being funded by Rooms & Meals Tax most of which comes from tourists because most of the tourists stay in hotels. Residents of New Hampshire don't need to stay in our own hotels and they spend a good portion on meals. So, who's really funding this. Is it the taxpayer or is it the tourists. Should be invest in something that the tourists will come and see or should we just try to take the money that other communities make on tourists and invest it in something that is gone tomorrow. Thank you.

Bob Katchen, 91 Chad Road, Manchester, NH, stated:

Let me first say that when I first started this whole thing last week I was a hundred percent negative against the civic center. I'm not kind of on the fence. I do want you to know that I have an issue with the Rooms & Meals Tax coming back into the City, wherever it goes it's not coming back into my pocket and I didn't know that until these proceedings started. So, thank you for educating me on that. During the first meeting which was last Tuesday one or two questions were thrown out. Ask the kids what they want. So, I asked my son and I was very careful to give them the pros and the cons to make sure that I didn't flavor his response and in the eyes of a ten and a half year old he said no. I said why. He said he likes Collector's Heaven. I said well what if they move up the street. He said no, I like it where it is. So, there's one 10 1/2 year old's response. I then polled my wife just to make sure that I wasn't on the outskirts of the whole thing and neither my wife or I are sports oriented so we're not interested in hockey, not interested in wrestling, truck matches...we took our family to Durham to see Disney On Ice; that day cost me over \$150.00, we won't repeat that for a number of years. I then asked her what about the civic center itself. She said well, I'm still against it and one of the issues that I have is the Millyard. Two or three years ago the Millyard was the thing to talk about. There were all kinds of plans, an architect was hired, landscapers were looked into...that was going to be the gem that was going to bring back Manchester. I see a little bit of development down there, I see some run down buildings, that's a thorn in my side. To address the issue from a gentleman from New Hampshire College who is the coach, New Hampshire College just put a couple of million dollars into their campus, I live around the corner from them so I watched them build. What did they build...dormitory and academic space. If New Hampshire College is concerned about sports maybe they should have put in a sports arena or increased the size of their own facility. Another issue is schools. I'm on the PTO of Webster School, I guarantee you if you had to use the bathrooms that my son use you'd hold it all day like he does. Why don't you take a walk through the schools, address issues like that, and maybe I won't be so adamant about it. The PTO every year contributes \$3,000 for bus fare for trips. I thought that came out of tax money. The PTO contributes over \$5,000 a year for computers, I don't that came out of tax money. The PTO has budgeted \$4,000 this year for programs those are the people that come and dance on the stage and do arts and crafts, I thought that came out of tax money. Well, I'm the treasurer of the Webster PTO and I know where it comes from. In closing, at the very first meeting a lot of people threw a charge at you and said make the hard decision and the intimation at that point was hold that decision to yourselves and make it. Well, I'll tell you to make even a harder decision. The worst decision or the hardest decision anybody can make is to relinquish control. This is my kingdom, I can control it. What I've heard tonight

and what I've heard in previous meetings has been almost 50/50. For me, it's too close to call and right now I'm on the fence, but damn it this vote is a luxury, it's not a snowplow, it's not a school budget, it's not a sewer system, it's not a sewer plant, it's a luxury and the people of Manchester deserve a vote on a luxury.

Thank you.

Charlie Pace stated:

I came to Manchester by choice in 1970 and brought a few million bucks from Uncle Sam. I think it was well-invested in setting a foundation for what you gentlemen are faced with tonight. But, I want a public forum to just air something that bothered me. I belong to an international organization called Rotary and I heard some really terrible things said about the members of the committee who also happen to be Rotarians and I'd like to ask Skip Ashooh one important question. We have a creed in Rotary and it's a four-way test. Skip, what the first item on the four-way test.

Mr. Ashooh replied oh, Charlie, you're going to make me look bad. Is it the truth.

Mr. Pace replied yes. Now, I'd like to ask Dick a question. Dick, I think you were on the original board with me at Queen City, you've done a lot of traveling, you've met a lot of Rotarians. Have you ever met a Rotarian and this is an international, I think you've been through a couple of foreign countries, I know I have. Have you ever met a Rotarian that violated that.

Mr. Charpentier replied just one foreign country, Charlie, Tobago when we did that mission and no I don't.

Mr. Pace stated incidentally Barry Brensinger is a former President of Rotary. I was delighted to hear somebody who's a real leader, a home grown leader with vision call in the other night and give this...a civic center his unqualified support...and if I didn't know the details, I'd go along just on his vision and his name is Sylvio Dupuis. Now, we have another natural born leader with vision who's our Mayor and I think we have a good Board of Aldermen who have vision. Let's do it guys, let's look into the future and let's do something for Manchester. Let's build on the foundation we have. Thank you.

Jim Wilson Napier, Pine Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

First and foremost the people of the City of Manchester have a right to vote on how you are going to squander over the next 30 years over \$100 million of their money. I've sat in a lot of these meetings...originally, I was very excited and very supportive of this project. Sitting in these meetings has been an education. I've heard that we should...tonight I heard we should spend \$100 million to celebrate

the new millennium, a fireworks display would be a helluva lot cheaper. I heard a misplaced Massachusetts yuppie...in the basement of the Library surrounded by tens of thousands of volumes of valuable literature claim we should spend a hundred million dollars to alleviate his boredom. I heard a recent carpetbagger from Arizona claim that she knows better than native New Englander's what to do with funds in New England. I heard a poorly paid school teacher who has to moonlight by promoting the dubious various song stylings of someone named Alabama, it's a shame we can't pay school teachers enough so that they can do their jobs as school teachers. Thursday in *The Union Leader* we had battling stories the lead said "no building, no franchise"...all along this committee has been telling us "no franchise, no building". Well, someone's got it wrong. Before we had ever gotten to the point of a vote architectural designs for the various sites should have been drawn, engineering studies should have been performed...I heard over the weekend there is a potential of a serious problem of ground water at the Staples site; that would definitely drive the \$100 million up excessively. People have mentioned parking tonight and I've raised that issue myself a number of times. The issue of parking has not been addressed, there has been no serious commitment to parking and mark my words in two or three years we are going to have these folks come back to us and say oops, we goofed, we need more money for a parking garage; that will definitely drive this project up well in excess of \$100 million. If this was such a good deal and for Ogden and Enron it is, I wish I were either Ogden or Enron it's an excellent deal for them. If this was a good deal for the taxpayers of Manchester it would be 80 private, 20 public. I met a highly respected State Senator over the weekend and I said to her would I be wrong in characterizing the State reimbursement of Rooms & Meals Tax as a nice free worded sweet sentiment than unfunded ones similar to the Oginblik formula and she said I would not be wrong. As I have said before we have been treated to the spectacle on Channel 9 that we will not be able to open the Middle School because we don't have enough money, but we apparently have enough to squander \$100 million of the taxpayers money on this and it will be the taxpayer's money. There was another 500 point crash on the Stock Market today. If we are in an economic slump next year, the State will not be able to afford to reimburse. This will come out of everyone's tax dollars in this City. Thank you.

Richard Gustafson, stated:

I must admit I admire your patience with all of us as we go through this process, it's not easy. I spent some time last week at the Library listening to testimony and again at West High School on another evening last week and spent some time in front of Channel 16 watching the call-in and this evening and I think that this is a project we ought to support. I was mildly supportive of it as we began, but I

wanted to listen to the three evenings plus the television program and I'm in full support of it and I urge the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to support it for three reasons. First, was the reason I brought up in testimony several nights ago. I think as we look at the revenue stream coming into the City from our Rooms & Meals Tax it makes sense to diversify those investments, to use some of that revenue to support things that we currently have and we need to maintain. Also, to use some of that revenue to build for the future and to invest in our future as a City and thirdly to keep some of that revenue available for other things that may come along that we don't know of today so that we can invest in that as well. Secondly, I think that the committee has done an excellent job in meeting the demands and the requirements of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen in putting together this transaction. It lowers the risk to the City about as far as you can go, in terms of the long-term risk, if this is a resounding success we won't share in it that much, but that was our choice, we wanted a low-risk investment, an insured investment, an investment that has private dollars in it and it will serve the City and help its economic development and I think that the committee is bringing the Board of Mayor and Aldermen that particular proposal. And, finally, I think the reason I'm supportive of this is that it speaks to the long-term health of the City. We've talked a lot about change this evening and the other evening's before. We are moving ahead with greater and greater change and I think the infrastructure that we need to stay competitive changes as well. Cities don't start with communities of people just coming there to live. Communities start because commerce begins... whether it's along a river, in a harbor, wherever that might be and that's how Manchester started. Insofar as we are building an economy in commerce we need to continue that. There is no city or town in this country that survives on residential property taxes alone. They must have a commerce base and that commerce base must be revitalized from time-to-time and I think that a civic center is a positive step in this direction. We're moving forward quickly as Marge McLuen says we can't do that by using our rearview mirror as our sole navigational device. We need to look at the horizon and see what's there and try to figure that out. As most of you know I'm associated with New Hampshire College, I'm proud to say that our name was raised several times this evening, but sometimes in jest, I think but let me just put a couple of things straight. We are a business and make no bones about it. We've have about 300 employees, our economic impact in this City is \$150 million a year, we pay over \$100,000 in property taxes to the City of Manchester, even though we're non-profit and I'll speak for St. Anselm's for a moment while Fr. Jonathan's not here. They are the largest taxpayer in the Town of Goffstown. So, even though we are non-profit and we think we bring a lot to the table in the City, we are businesses and we can be healthy if the City is healthy. If the City is not healthy regardless of how well we

do as colleges, we cannot be healthy. Bridgeport, Connecticut is a prime example of this. The University of Bridgeport, a beautiful growing university in the 1940's and 1950's the City around it fell apart, the university could not be healthy. We cannot be healthy as a collegiate community in this City without a healthy Manchester and I think that the civic center will improve the health of this City and the surrounding towns as well and I urge you to support it. Thank you very much.

Chairman Wihby asked, Alderman Shea, would you like to address this Committee again and can you keep it short.

Alderman Shea replied yes. Mr. Charpentier if you could answer this or maybe Kevin Clougherty. Right now, we receive \$450,000 or \$459,000 that goes into our general fund from the Rooms & Meals Tax. let's assume we only receive that amount, will that be applied to the bonding or will that continue to be applied to the general fund.

Chairman Wihby replied the general fund's the answer.

Alderman Shea stated it will not be affected, at all. The first \$459,000 if that's all we receive will not be affected, at all.

Mr. Ashooh stated if you can take a look at that chart, Alderman, you can see that green line on the base, that is a constant during the entire process.

Alderman Shea stated so only if we receive \$459,000 that will go to the general fund.

Mr. Ashooh replied that is correct.

Alderman Shea stated a second point is let's assume that the citizens referendum approves a bonding, will the two financial institutions that do the bonding have any tie in together, is there any relationship between the bond company that will bond the loan and the bonding or the company that will insure the loan, will they be subsidiaries or will they be...

Mr. Ashooh replied the company that would be retained as the bond underwriter, William R. Hough and Company, I think you met with their representatives already. When they put the package together, they then go out and seek independent insurance from a third party company. There are three major companies in the country right now that people know of...MGIC which is...

Alderman Shea stated okay, so you answered by question, I don't want to continue because I only have five minutes, thanks. This is directed to Mr. Murray and I congratulate you for putting up your money along with the other three investors and I really think that you fellas are one of the few people that are putting yourselves out on the limb, if anyone were to put themselves out, so I want to acknowledge that fact publicly, I know I complimented you privately. But, a couple of questions. Assuming that you and the other three people are able to obtain an American League franchise would you explain how this process might work. For example, where will the franchise come from, why might it be leaving its present home base, how long has it been there, and does it have a lease and can it break this lease. In other words, when you begin to get a hockey franchise you're going to get a pre-existing hockey franchise so it has to be someplace now, I assume. So, in essence, why do people leave places.

Mr. Murray replied we could either get an expansion franchise which would be a brand new franchise or we could buy an existing one. We have yet to identify or negotiate with an existing franchise.

Alderman Shea stated so that question is really undetermined at present.

Mr. Murray replied correct.

Alderman Shea stated my point is that there are certain franchises that have been recorded that tend to stay a certain amount of time in a particular location and then because of economics and so forth they leave that particular area and go someplace else and I'm wondering if that is going to occur in the American Hockey League where we have 17 teams now.

Mr. Murray stated it has occurred in the past, teams do move from city to city, it could happen.

Alderman Shea stated finally the question Skip of...

Mr. Ashooh interjected let me add one more piece to that. Teams may leave for a number of reasons, you asked about economics. There are three AHL teams right now that play in buildings smaller than 3,000 seats. There are also a number of teams and the American Hockey League has had two decisions that they make. One decision is they will always have fewer teams than there are NHL teams (major league teams) and they require that all of their AHL teams have an affiliation with the major league teams. So, that creates a certain amount of demand. But, there are right now franchises that exist that are dormant. They've been owned, they've never been staffed. They've basically been bought, put aside and they create an inventory. Those teams are also on there and they move from nowhere else but may come here. So, there's a team but it's like a shell corporation.

Alderman Shea asked would they be affiliated with the National Hockey League.

Mr. Ashooh replied they have affiliations now, that's correct.

Alderman Shea stated usually some teams will have six or eight players from one team and six or either...

Mr. Ashooh stated the Los Angeles Kings right now as a matter of fact leases about six of their players to the Montreal Canadians that play out of Fredericton, they share teams quite often. But the Los Angeles Kings have also made noise that they would like to have their own franchise some day.

Alderman Shea stated another point is, Skip, there was a question of contingencies in terms of the building, the capital improvement, and I'd like to raise this question concerning any contingencies in terms of either Enron or Ogden. Let's assume, for instance, that there's a lease signed with Ogden and five years down the road they're finding that for whatever reason they're not able to make a profit, they are really losing money, substantial money. So, they come to you or people on the Board and they say look, this isn't working out, we need additional help in order to make this a go. We need parking, we need to get revenue from parking...I think that was an initial requisition...\$3.00 or \$7.00, I don't think that's in the makeup now, we need additional infrastructure improvements in order for us to be feasible or else we'll break the lease. Is that possible for them to do that.

Mr. Ashooh replied the bottom line on that...they break the lease they leave behind the \$11.5 million investment in the building. Awful hard to walk away from once you've put it in there. So, if they don't perform and they decide to break their lease and go away they've left behind the substantial cash, the building, then bonds completed to the City...we paid 80 cents on the dollar for a building that we can now lease out to someone else.

Alderman Shea stated so it is conceivable that that is an option on their part.

Mr. Ashooh asked are you telling me you're going to walk away from \$11.5 million.

Alderman Rivard stated thank you, Alderman.

Alderman Shea stated one other point, Mr. Rivard, if I may. I would like the referendum question to include the length of time that it will involve. In other words, if it's going to be ten years, twenty years, or thirty years. I think that's very important rather than just saying it's going to be Rooms & Meals, I'd like that to be included. And, I'd like to compliment you people on a fine job.

Jerry Vachon, Riverbank Road, Manchester, NH, stated:

I've been watching the television as far as your other meetings and this is the first time I was able to attend. I've seen and heard so much about what's going on here about the civic center. One thing I would like to know and seeing how we have a prominent representative from New Hampshire College, if there isn't a course that I could take that could help me understand how I can go and ask people to give me money, I won't pay them back, and they won't reap any benefits that I have from it. I'd like to know what course to learn that, if there's some economic course. Second, in response to a gentleman who answered to Mr. Hebert...then helping, the very nice gentleman, very good writer I'd like to respond to what you said about celebrating history by also celebrating the future. As you know and you've gone to Washington many times, you look at the buildings that are there...all the Smithsonian's they were not private funds. They were celebrated by proud Americans who reaped the benefits of this great country and donated all those buildings, they used their money, not other peoples money. I am totally against a civic center if it's on the back of the taxpayers. I don't understand why its such a problem deciding that when you have so many constituents wanting it to be a referendum. You're bringing it to these meetings which is totally understandable, but the real question is what are we going to gain from this. My first question to you, Chairman Wihby, is the money that you have to pay from Rooms & Meals every year have the bond, if the money's not met the bond takes over and pays,

but the bonding company is going to come back to the City, are they not, for that money.

Chairman Wihby replied no, they would have gotten paid upfront. So, whatever the agreement was upfront.

Mr. Vachon stated for 30 years, \$570,000 is going to take care of everything.

Chairman Wihby stated \$750,000.

Mr. Vachon stated at \$750,000 that's going to take care of it for 30 years and the City will never have to increase its taxes in case it defaults.

Chairman Wihby replied right and it's all or none. If we don't get that, that's why the question was asked...\$50 million fully insured. If we can't get those bonds, we won't go forward with that.

Mr. Vachon stated it is my understanding that the bonding company bonds a certain dollar amount and if someone defaults they pay the person that is receiving it, but they also go back on the person who's obligated for the funds to begin with. Is this something new.

Chairman Wihby replied this is insurance, we have the Finance Director here, but this is insurance that would insure that we would never go into...if the Rooms & Meals was taken away or something happened, we didn't have it anymore this insurance would cover that fully and fully fund that. But, we're paying for it (\$750,000).

Mr. Vachon stated my second question is the company who is so generously, the two companies who are so generously giving 20 percent are they signing a 30-year lease.

Mr. Ashooh replied it's proposed that they sign a 15-year lease.

Mr. Vachon stated if we've got to make the effort of 30 years and you're only giving 20 percent and you're only getting a 15-year lease, now how does that work on our backs. After 15 years if you decide hey that's it.

Mr. Ashooh replied if after 15 years if we decide that's it we have a building that we can then release. Typically what happens when a tenant either runs the end of their term they either renegotiate a new lease with you or you get a new tenant.

Mr. Vachon stated but if it's such a good deal and we've got to go for 30 years why can't you follow us.

Mr. Ashooh stated what we're looking at, Sir, is frankly a structure that takes all of the risk off of the taxpayers back, gives us what we need in Downtown Manchester and brings a company here that's making an investment in your building. They're giving us a 15-year commitment; that's a solid business proposition. At the end of that 15 years that building is basically ours.

Mr. Vachon stated I hope that people are listening to this that you're only making a 15-year commitment to a 30-year like we have to make and it's just not us making 30 years, we're making a commitment to our children and grandchildren who are going to have to pick up the tab if something goes wrong.

Mr. Ashooh stated if something goes wrong, Sir, I'd just like to emphasize that the insurance is an absolute. It's a business risk that is insured. It is definite. It is from the first dollar to the last dollar. It is for 30 years. It is one cost upfront.

Mr. Vachon stated well, all well and said right at this point, that's all black and white that you have on paper right now. No one can predict the future just like one gentleman saying about the stock market and we don't know what's going to happen. but, one last comment before the evening is over is that all of the proponents for this are basically...they own homes also but they all own businesses. They have a way to write this off, we don't. We don't have a way. I'm a single-family homeowner and I am on a strict income, I only have so much. I have no way to write this off, business people do. If it's such a good deal like the 26 year old who said I've got faith in the City and he even said it why don't we take back all of the money we donate to the Boys Club and everything and start our own civic center. Well, great. Why don't you all take your money and do it. You're the one who's going to reap from this, there isn't one citizens who's going to reap from this unless he owns a business. Not one property owner is going to reap from this.

Alderman Rivard interjected thank you, Gerry.

Mr. Vachon continued by stating usually when you make an investment to try to change the quality of the City how does that happen when you don't get anything in return. Thank you.

Selectman Sandra Rogers, 531 Weston Road, Manchester, NH, stated:

I just wanted to let you know I'm an aerobics instructor and maybe we should have a cup of coffee afterwards to get your energy up here. I'm a candidate for State Representative and volunteer for Governor Shaheen. I'm a single working mom, college graduate, now studying law in a paralegal degree at New Hampshire Community Tech. I'm a lifelong resident in Manchester and I'm a homeowner. My concern is the ability of our citizens to pay for any increase in taxes. And, like the man had just said here before it's not the people that don't own businesses, it's the single taxpayer person that owns a home and has to foot the bill for the civic center if something does go wrong. Sure, I'd like to buy a Viper for my brother but my taxes have to come first. You know I've only got limited income here being a single mom, but I'm for progress as well as the next guy is and if building a civic center in the Manchester Downtown area helps the businessman to increase their profits well, that's great if they're a hotel or a restaurant owner but what about the other businessmen that are Downtown that presently have parking problems, it's only going to increase their problems for parking. Are they still going to go forgotten as well. I question the research presently done on the civic center and I don't feel there's enough proof that the Rooms & Meals Tax will be adequate. If the Board and Mayor and Aldermen can clearly state that our taxes will not be increased in any trickle down effects from this civic center, I'll support it. I don't support building the civic center if the proposed site at Staples on Elm Street and also possibly affecting the elderly homes that's in back of it. Right now, we don't have enough adequate homing for the elderly and to displace them...where are they going to go with limited income, that's my problem right there, if that is a problem. They have been long-term residents here and they deserve the consideration as the next guy. Don't misunderstand me I'm not for... I'm for the wealth that Manchester can create from any kind of increase in business if that's going to happen. I'm just a single person here. Bigger cities with civic centers do have higher crime rates, okay and increase in traffic that comes along with it. How can our Police Department at their current staff level handle these pressures. Our tax supporters as myself are from the working community here and we are the ones that pay their pays right now and I just have a feeling that with the increase of crime that the trickle down effect is going to display a lot of hidden costs that we don't know of right now. I guess that's it, thanks for your time.

Chairman Wihby stated, Sandra, there's a letter that we brought into the record from the head of the State Police...I guess we got the letter tonight, the Mayor was showing it to me when I took a little break up there saying that in fact crime would go down if that was put in and he's got some sort of a test or something or a survey that he's going to be giving us, so we can let you see it when we get it.

Raymond Houle, 200 Parkview Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'd like to thank all of the Aldermen including those on the Committee for being here and listening to the hours of testimony as well as all of those on the committee that have done such a good job with preparing a good program for the civic center. I am in favor of the civic center and I feel that the Aldermen should take the bull by the horns, they were voted into office and they should take the step to take the number of people that have given their comments and act in interest of the City. Manchester just like any small city or any small business has to invest money in order to get a return. If we want new businesses to come into Manchester, new industry to come into Manchester, new people to move into Manchester. We have to have things to bring them as a magnet to interest them to come into Manchester and make it their site. So, I strongly support the civic center and I hope that you take the lead just as Ken Rhodes mentioned though he is a member of the Town of auburn and be unable to vote if there is a special election ballot on this, he works in Manchester as he stated, he owns a business in Manchester and he would appreciate having the civic center from the vote of the Aldermen. Thank you very much.

Andy Martel, 237 Riverdale Avenue, Manchester, NH, stated:

I spoke to Skip last week and it's going to be very brief, two minutes, I know it's a long night and I think that the people of Manchester should recognize that if someone was going to bring credibility to this plan it's going to be Skip Ashooh. Skip is very well respected and so isn't his family and congratulations, Skip, and I think that Dick Charpentier bring credibility too. So, I think that we're in good hands. In fact, I know we are. It will no longer be business as usual with the same people making these determinations. But, the things when I was walking around in Ward 9 because I am a candidate and I'm not going to use this issue as a political football to get elected or anything else, but the basic questions were how big is this thing going to be. People still don't understand that. What about the parking needs, having an underground parking lot. Now, you talked about that and this is the third time you've talked about this, so it's a matter of people getting educated again. Besides sports can we envision some art exhibits, flower shows, auto shows, antique shows, stamp/coin shows and card shows besides the circuses and all this stuff and these are all events that will fill the civic center throughout

the entire year. Now, some people are saying that we don't have to only focus on sports, let's make sure that we have a well-rounded list of programs and make sure we have increased revenues for the City. Will we entertain cost-sharing with other counties such as Rockingham or Belknap County and I think that that's a wonderful idea and how about the possibility of a user fee for those who don't live in Manchester that use the civic center through ticket purchases or other areas. Are we entertaining an NHL franchise affiliated with either the Boston Bruins or the Montreal Canadians. It would be very intelligent to do that because this is prime Bruins country and so isn't prime Montreal Canadians country. Why can't we build this thing where the JFK Coliseum is or part of Gill Stadium. I think that that answer is very simple, simpler than the others because of the fact that that is an old dump site and I don't think you could ever be feasible to build this on that site and then we'd still lose revenues from the fact that we could have other leagues playing at the JFK and I wouldn't want that to happen. So, these are the questions that were asked...nothing in opposition to the civic center, but curious questions which have to be addressed and I think that you've done a good job of doing that tonight. Now, I personally have a feeling concerning the civic center. My three older children used to drive to Worcester, Springfield, Hartford, Providence to go to concerts and let me tell you until you have children that drive out-of-town to go to these concerts and you stay up all night worrying if they're going to get back home you can be against this, but I'd rather see them here safe and sound and the parents don't have to worry.

Rick Blais, Bedford, NH, stated:

I'm a property owner in Manchester and also a business owner in Manchester and also one of the older people in the Jaycees, they all left early. But, basically closing up I think the important thing here is the issue of putting it on the ballot, not to put it on the ballot and you as elected officials I think the important thing is the leadership role you hold for the City that you're elected to and you have all the information as a man said earlier all of the facts pretty much in front of you... tonight was emotional...we heard everything how someone was conceived in their mother's womb and all that good stuff but emotions aside as intelligent people. You have to make those logical decisions the pros and cons. A simple thing that Ben Franklin came up with the old team effort, positive things on one side of the paper, negative on the other and come up with a logical decision. Part of being a leader is the visionaries. I know in my business it's important that I foresee the future before the average person does to bring out the best in them and I think as part of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen that's an important role to have. A lot of the people that spoke here tonight, a lot of them anti-business, well not a lot of

them but a handfuls heckling business owners but yet they talk about how beautiful the Amoskeag Mill are. It was businesses that started that, but yet they're making the businessman look bad. We're looking to the future. We all have a vital interest in seeing it succeed. So, hopefully you guys will take that leadership role you're all elected to and do a great job, I'm sure you all will. Thank you very much.

Gary Frost, 89 Lovering Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I have a prepared statement but I am not going to read it in consideration of everyone's time. Gentlemen, opportunity does not knock that often. Let's not let this go by. Please vote in favor of the civic center.

Chairman Wihby stated the following communications had been received and asked that they be read into the record as follows:

I apologize for not being able to appear in front of you this evening. I have been out of work for an extended period following back surgery and now am experiencing complications from an allergic reaction to the medication I was given. I sincerely hope, however, this letter might be useful in your deliberations on the Civic Center issue.

The Center of new Hampshire is very strongly behind the concept of the Civic Center. While there are some concerns, I believe the positive aspects of the Civic Center far outweigh any negatives we have heard thus far. I believe this project presents a very valuable economic initiative to, not only downtown Manchester, but to the City as a whole.

Many of the arguments I have heard thus far center around the concern that no one living here in Manchester will be able to afford such a project, that it will only cater to people outside the City. Well, isn't that what we truly want? Just as The Center of New Hampshire Holiday Inn caters mostly to people from out of town, it is the revenues from those visitors that generates in excess of \$500,000 a year from this hotel in the rooms and meals taxes. That is revenue that benefits the City and her residents and a significant portion of that comes from visitors to our city. If you were to ask many of the other businesses downtown what benefit they derive from the nearly 80,000 overnight guests we generate in a year, not to mention the tens of thousands who attend functions here, you will undoubtedly find they are extremely happy with what business levels that are a direct result of our hotel guests. These purchases range from clothes at George's and

McQuades, to restaurants downtown, to gas for their cars. They use the Manchester Airport when coming to town and generate revenues for the City there, as well. You then need to consider the volume of business this creates for the local businesses in town who supply us with everything from food and beverage items to paper supplies. You also need to consider the benefits of employment opportunities that this creates. The Center of New Hampshire alone produces roughly 230 jobs.

Much of the discussion I have heard relating to the Civic Center relates to sporting events. These kinds of events would generate a major flow of revenues for the City and the businesses supporting the Civic Center. However, what we don't hear much discussion about is the opportunity to attract conventions, trade shows and exhibitions in the off season to Manchester at a level we have never seen before. The Boston market is running at all-time highs in occupancy and rate growth. There is an endless list of groups and associations that are currently being pushed out of Boston due to rate or availability. Many of those represent business that could be attracted to Manchester where they never would before. I have had some preliminary discussions from a representative from Ogdon about joint marketing efforts that could bring this kind of business to the City. The opportunities for this simple reach the sky.

There are some concerns I have heard that have validity to them, specifically parking and traffic. I remain very optimistic that these issues can be addressed effectively, and they must in order for the businesses downtown to all succeed. Parking is a primary concern of ours. We currently have major concerns with the available parking for patrons attending functions or staying overnight with us. Many of these people have expressed their anger both to us and to the Mayor's office over the lack of parking nearby. Our business levels are currently at an all-time high in the 14-year history of this hotel. Based on our pre-sale activity we are looking at 1999 to be even stronger and the year 2000 to exceed that. If parking is already an issue, it's only going to get more complicated as we continue to grow. Without a solid plan to address the parking issue, the addition of the Civic Center will compound the problems even more. If you have heard the argument the Civic Center parking will be for nighttime events only, I would remind you that a great deal of our major banquet business also occurs at night. Many of these functions and trade shows attract anywhere from 300 to 5000 people. If you, planning to attend an

event at the Civic Center, had the opportunity to park in a parking garage or on the street or open parking lot in inclement winter weather, which would you choose? I am extremely fearful if this issue is not adequately addressed, it will, without question, hurt our business.

As I stated, I believe these concerns need to be and can be addressed satisfactorily. We all want to approach this matter with the intent of making it a win-win situation for everyone. Now is the time to get all the issues on the floor to help us in making the best possible decision.

Thank you very much for your anticipated consideration of this matter.

Sincerely yours,
The Center of New Hampshire/Holiday Inn

s/R. Sean O'Kane
General Manager

Dear Alderman Wihby:

The present working of the proposed Civic Center referendum does not make clear that the City is paying 80% of the cost and that private sectors funds pay 20% of the cost of the construction bonds.

Insertion of these facts in the referendum would read as follows: "Should the Board of Mayor and Aldermen approve the issuance of up to \$50 million in fully insured bonds for the construction of a civic center in downtown Manchester to be paid with 20% private funds and the remaining 80% from a portion of the city's share of the meals and rooms tax?"

I believe that we as voters will make a better decision where we have more complete information, especially when it is a question of spending tax dollars.

Sincerely yours,

s/Alice D. Krasner

There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Cashin, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and to receive and file any written documentation presented.

Chairman Wihby advised that the second purpose of the meeting is a discussion relative to the proposed civic center.

Alderman Hirschmann moved to recommend to the full Board that the question as amended be placed on the November 3, 1993 State Election ballot. Alderman Rivard duly seconded the motion.

Alderman O'Neil stated, Mr. Chairman, there's just been some discussion on whether or not there should be a maximum of the City (80 percent) in there.

Chairman Wihby asked do you want to read it again.

“Should the Board of Mayor and Aldermen approve the issuance of up to \$50,000,000 fully insured bonds for the construction of a civic center in downtown Manchester. Total project to be paid with private funds and a portion of the City's share of the State Meals and Rooms revenue?”

Alderman O'Neil stated, I just throw that out, Mr. Chairman, whether or not there should be a maximum of the City's contribution. I know there's some discussion that the \$50 million would be the maximum which I guess would be approximately 80 percent.

Chairman Wihby stated that is where that number came from that that would be the max that we would be into it for. Again, this was reviewed by the City Solicitor, he gave it to me this morning and said that he didn't have any problems with it. He thought that if you put any percentages in there it would just mess up the deal because if we had it more than 20 percent private funding and we said 20 percent that that could cause a problem. So, his suggestion was as long as we have the max and that's why the number \$50 million that he thought this would be worded correctly. This is a recommendation that we'd vote on at the Board tomorrow. The Board can take amendments tomorrow if something else comes up.

Alderman O'Neil stated I believe that Alderman Hirschmann's motion is that we go to referendum and this is the proper wording.

Chairman Wihby replied right.

Alderman Cashin stated thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ladies and gentlemen, people were talking about they want leadership here tonight. Well, I think this Board is going to show you leadership. The people that don't want this to go to a referendum are making a very serious mistake. This question is going to come before the Board of Aldermen probably a half-a-dozen times and the bond issue and whatever and every time...if we don't go to a referendum we're going to be criticized for it. This has to go to a referendum ladies and gentlemen. It is the only way it is going to survive and I promise you that.

Chairman Wihby called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Alderman O'Neil stated, Mr. Chairman, I hope that we would schedule at some point in the next month maybe to bring all of the parties back together to either appear before this Committee or it might be appropriate to the full Board, obviously, there is a lot of information that's been received the last week or so with the four public hearings and I would encourage that and moved on the suggestion.

Chairman Wihby stated that's not a problem. The intention of having these three public hearings and being on TV and everything else was to get this out to the public so that they couldn't say that somebody was hiding something. I would envision that once the referendum is okayed tomorrow that the full Board will hold, I would suggest that the full Board hold another public hearing sometime in September or October to give us more input once the referendum question is there and in the meantime this Committee would still be working and I know Skip and your group is willing to meet anytime we want so if you have any questions or whatever we can meet with them and work with the full team.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Cashin, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee