

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

May 27, 1997

Aldermen Robert, Wihby, Reiniger,
Clancy, Domaingue

6:30 PM

Aldermanic Chambers

In the absence of Chairman Robert the Clerk called the meeting to order and requested a motion to elect a chairman pro-tem.

On motion of Alderman Domaingue, duly seconded by Alderman Clancy, it was voted to elect Alderman Reiniger to chair the meeting.

The clerk called the roll.

Present: Alderman Reiniger, Alderman Clancy, Alderman Domaingue

Absent: Alderman Wihby, Alderman Robert

Chairman Reiniger first addressed item 14 due to time constraints of members of the MTA needing to attend another meeting.

On motion of Alderman Domaingue, duly seconded by Alderman Clancy, it was voted to remove the following item from the table for discussion.

14. Communication from members of the Manchester Child Care Committee requesting to meet with City officials to discuss the problem associated with the transportation of school children from Manchester schools to their respective after-school programs.
(Tabled 3/11/97)

Mr. Ronald Roy of the Manchester Transit Authority addressed the Committee explaining that state statute did not allow them to do the child care transportation. In response to questions, Mr. Roy explained that the state law precluded it if there

was a private firm that could locally provide the service and in Manchester's instance there was two. Additionally, with the federal funding, they only had three spare buses to cover the transit services when others were down being repaired or maintained. In response to further question, Mr. Roy advised that they had been providing the service until a driver had refused to do it. The driver had told them they were in violation legally and when they looked into it with the State were advised that they could not provide the child care transportation.

On motion of Alderman Domaingue, duly seconded by Alderman Clancy, it was voted to receive and file the communication and request the clerk to inform the child care committee that it had reviewed the information and found that the Transit Authority could not provide the service; that if the Child Care Committee had new information to please inform them and they would be invited to speak at a subsequent meeting.

3. Copy of a communication from Marypat Bilodeau, Greater Manchester Board of Realtors, submitting proposals relative to their concerns about the City and its declining Downtown.

Alderman Domaingue moved for discussion. Alderman Clancy seconded the motion.

Chairman Reiniger noted that this letter was an example of how the city was not advertising to the public the good things that were happening.

Mr. MacKenzie addressed the committee noting that frequently people don't know what is going on in the downtown, certainly there has been some lean years here because there were a lot of changes particularly in the financial institutions that occurred several years ago. Mr. MacKenzie noted that there were a lot of things going on, there are no really vacant pieces of city property that the city is not trying to do something with, he thought the Board of Mayor and Aldermen had been very supportive of trying to do projects in the downtown area. Mr. MacKenzie noted that Jay Taylor and Rich Davis were present, he had a map showing some of the other projects going on but felt Jay could speak to the issue of Bridge and Elm site and 1037 Elm Street building.

Mr. Taylor stated it was unfortunate that we don't do as good a job of talking about what it is we are doing as we should, on the other hand some of these things have received some publicity and should not be totally unknown.

Mr. Taylor commented that with respect to Bridge and Elm Street the property is owned by the Manchester Development Corporation (MDC) and it was acquired at the end of 1993 at the request of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to protect it from some sort of inappropriate development that might occur there were there to be no control on the property, and when MDC acquired the property he thought it was fairly clear that there was very little demand for vacant land in the downtown area because of the recession and that we might have to sit on this for a number of years in order to do something with it. MDC at their planning meeting, held in January 1997, took that particular issue on as one of their priorities for the year and have appointed a subcommittee to deal with this, the subcommittee has met on a number of occasions and he could tell them that the subcommittee is heading towards doing something along the lines of what this letter suggests, in terms of trying to make a marketing program which will hopefully begin later this summer. Mr. Taylor stated that what the outcome of that is going to be is a guess, they did not know what kind of demand was out there but they intended to find out, and once they get some inquiries then they can decide as to what the best manner of disposing of the property. Mr. Taylor noted that this initiative was underway and the Board would be hearing more about that because prior to any activities being initiated, the MDC will come to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and ask for permission to actually carry this out, so this will be known to them before they do anything.

With regard to the 1037 Elm Street property, Mr. Taylor advised that the committee and the full Board adopted a recommendation of the Planning Director and he proceed with an RFP process to entertain proposals for development of that property. A draft RFP is being reviewed and they intended to send that out for public consumption probably by the middle of next week, with a deadline of the end of the first week in July of actually receiving proposals. Mr. Taylor noted that they had received a number of calls on the property, they knew there was some interest there, and thought it was a good time to be doing this, although it remains to be seen what kind of proposals they would get, they suspected they would get a couple that would be pretty decent.

Mr. Taylor noted that the other area mentioned in the letter had to do with "other foreclosed properties that the city owns for taxes in the downtown" and he did not know which ones those were because there were none to his knowledge other than 1037 Elm. The other city owned property that they did have some control was 88 Lowell Street and the Committee was aware that they were in the process of trying to do something there as well. Mr. Taylor noted that it may be an err on our part that it had not been made known well to the general public.

Alderman Domaingue noted that the letter was dated February 3, and it is quite possible that at that time communication wasn't out there as to what the city was doing and some of the ideas that have since been brought forward to the Board were not available at the time the letter was written. Alderman Domaingue stated that she had raised an eyebrow about the foreclosed properties downtown and wondered how many she was referring to. She was not sure that she could support giving away a building in return for doing something with it, she did not think it would serve the taxpayers, but applauded Ms. Bilodeau and the Realtor Association for coming forward and attempting to give the city some ideas as to how they could help us.

Mr. Taylor stated he did not think that that sort of drastic action would be required and he thought whatever proposal they came in with eventually would be less honourous than that one, but it was obviously a possibility if that was what the Board decided it wanted to do. He was not suggesting nor did he think it would be suggested that a give away occur.

Alderman Domaingue asked about the empty storefronts on Elm Street, noting the impression an outsider will get coming into the city and seeing the empty storefronts, and it had been remarked to her by people that they had traveled to Concord and Nashua and they do not see empty storefronts and they want to know why Manchester is experiencing this as a continuation of the recession, and the other cities are not. Asking if someone had a perspective on that comment.

Mr. Davis of In-Town Manchester addressed the committee stating that part of the reason was the fact that so many of these buildings are still turning over. The impression that you get is that there are a lot of leaseable vacant spaces but in fact the spaces that you see are not leaseable because they are in buildings that are being sold and that they were expecting to turn over. Mr. Davis stated that they thought the buildings were beginning to turn over, they saw signs that people are beginning to buy those buildings, and In-Town was helping through the building improvement program that the city makes available through them to help people acquire the buildings and bring them back into leaseable condition. The central reason has to do with the poor condition into which many of the buildings had fallen between 1960 and 1990, and there is a lot of work to be done in many of them. In some cases, at least one where the city owns the property (1037 Elm) we have been trying to bring the windows back into the condition where it looks like the building is at least occupied and leaseable and they would continue to do that as the building turns over and finds a new use. The reason they saw it here as opposed to other places, is that so many of the buildings are actually for sale, and so few are actually, appearance being different than reality in this case, we find a number of the spaces that they would like to lease, would like to see filled are in

buildings that are for sale or in buildings that have basically been neglected for a long time, and were not leaseable. There are things that they can do to bring them back into leaseable condition.

Alderman Domaingue noted that there were several revolving loan programs available now to people who want to take advantage of them. Mr. Davis responded affirmatively.

Mayor Wieczorek stated that a remark that Jay Taylor made one time made a lot of sense "If you don't know what's going on in the community you assume nothing is going on." He thought this appropriate here noting there were a lot of things going on in the downtown area, and Mr. Davis was right about the turnover of the buildings, there were too many vacant buildings that people were not paying taxes on. Mayor Wieczorek noted that with 1037 the city spent \$125,000 on a roof to save the building; that a lot of things were beginning to happen the economy was finally taking a turn in Manchester. He noted that the tax base had been going down since 1988, and finally last year they had a positive impact on the city and the tax base of \$11 million which was taking them in the right direction, and they knew it would be a little bit larger this year. Mayor Wieczorek noted that the concentration of MEDO and In-Town Manchester was on the downtown/millyard and riverfront area to try to revitalize it, and it would not happen overnight but the commitment has been made to do everything that they could possibly can to revitalize this area.

Mayor Wieczorek noted that places were beginning to turn over the large building where Floyds and the telephone company used to be 1228/1230 he thought was under agreement - it had been vacant for a number of years. The same with the bond building at the corner of Elm and Concord, that building has also been sold now, so he thought there was an effort by the people who have purchased the building to do something with the property. A new owner was not in there for a place to loose money, they know they got something at a decent price and they think it is something they could lease up. He thought they would see a lot more aggressiveness on the part of trying to rent the properties, than the former landlords who were just trying to sell it.

Chairman Reiniger noted that Burlington, Vt.; Portland, Me.; or Portsmouth - these communities made a deep commitment to the downtown well before Manchester had, and we would catch up to them at some point. Chairman Reiniger commented that he had recently been to Napa, Ca. who was experiencing a similar situation as Manchester and had just recently made the commitment to its downtown, riverfront and music hall and bringing in new restaurants.

Mayor Wieczorek noted that he was not in favor of giving away the property at Bridge and Elm Streets, we paid a half million dollars to protect it, to make sure that there wasn't something there that was going to generate three or four jobs or have some sort of a business that wouldn't do much to revitalize the downtown. He thought they would like to pursue it aggressively if we can but the purpose of GMDC and now MDC was that we would take the money and as the properties move we would recycle the funds and continue to perform economic development. It would be much better to market the properties and have the funds come back.

On motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Alderman Domaingue, it was voted to receive and file the communication.

4. Communication from Ronald Dube advising of his interest in purchasing a parcel in the vicinity of Candia Road and Groveland Avenue in order to gain access to the back of his property.

On motion of Alderman Domaingue, duly seconded by Alderman Clancy, it was voted to refer the communication to the staff committee (SPOT), for review and report.

5. Communication from Roger Martineau, President of the Manchester Junior Soccer League West, requesting that the City allocate CIP funding to improve and enhance the facilities at the Piscataquog River Park.

Mr. Martineau addressed the committee explaining that the fields were in poor shape and needed to be brought up to condition for use. Mr. Martineau advised that the soccer league put approximately \$2,500. into the fields every year and had their kids cleaning the area. He explained that the fields were used by West High School teams and others in addition to the soccer league so they did not have sole access or control of the property. Within discussion Alderman Clancy suggested they could do like East Little League and get a loan. Mr. Martineau noted that they did not have exclusive use or control of the area so that would be difficult. Mr. Martineau noted the lack of the city or school putting funds into the park maintenance, or participating in its clean up. He did note that the Parks and Recreation Department was very helpful in trying to work with them this year and had provided some loom to assist with the problem.

General discussion of the needs for all parks and the current strategy of putting more funds into the parks and bringing them into condition through phased planning. Alderman Domaingue noted the need for patience in addressing the park issues city wide, but commented on the progress that had been made in this area, and the appreciation for volunteer agencies in helping to address the needs.

Mayor Wieczorek made similar comments on the progress to date and the good that volunteer organizations such as the soccer league did for the city.

6. Communication from Ms. Thimitra Petas wishing to donate land to the City located at 406 and 408 Manchester Street.

Alderman Clancy moved for discussion. Alderman Domaingue seconded the motion.

Discussion ensued where Mr. MacKenzie advised that the Board had been rejecting offers to take property unless there was a clear public purpose; that the city had nearly 200 properties now. Members concurred with this position but wanted to have the staff committee look at the property location and potential use.

On motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Alderman Domaingue, it was voted to refer the communication to the staff SPOT committee to review and report.

7. Communication from Emile Pouliot requesting that a street be named "Pouliot" in honor of his grandfather.

On motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Alderman Domaingue, it was voted to refer the communication to the Highway Commission.

8. Petition to discontinue Piedmont Street submitted by Paul and Susan Heon.

The clerk noted that the Highway Department had provided a report reflecting that the street had been discharged under state statute.

On motion of Alderman Domaingue, duly seconded by Alderman Clancy, it was voted to recommend a finding of statutory discharge pursuant to RSA 231:51.

9. Sewer abatement request by Sebastian Valente at 294 Granite Street.
(Note: EPD recommends denial of abatement request.)

Alderman Domaingue moved to deny the request noting that the basis of the request was caused by a leaking toilet which was a property maintenance issue. Alderman Clancy seconded the motion. The motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Reiniger advised if you desire to remove any of the following items from the Consent Agenda, please so indicate. If none of the items are to be removed, one motion only will be taken at the conclusion of the presentation.

- A. An amending resolution allowing for the acceptance and expenditure of grant funds by adding the Summer School '97 - \$42,323.60.
- B. An amending resolution and budget authorization allowing for the acceptance and expenditure of grant funds by increasing the 1996 CIP 4.10118 Cops More - \$36,943.00 (from \$59,593.00 to \$96,536.00 Dept. of Justice.)
- C. An amending resolution and budget authorization allowing for the acceptance and expenditure of grant funds by adding the 1997 CIP 4.20108 Violence Against Women - \$314,937.00 - U. S. Dept. of Justice.

HAVING READ THE CONSENT AGENDA, ON MOTION OF ALDERMAN DOMAINGUE, DULY SECONDED BY ALDERMAN CLANCY, IT WAS VOTED THAT THE CONSENT AGENDA BE APPROVED.

TABLED ITEMS

11. Communication from Al Lindquist, A & A Resource Mgt., Inc., requesting the City's assistance to expedite a closing on property located at 241 Crosbie Street which the City held at public auction in 1995.
(Tabled 6/10/96)

The committee was informed that the City Solicitor was still working with FDIC regarding this property.

This item remained on the table.

12. Communication from Donald Tomilson requesting the Committee review the current ordinance relating to deduct water meters, and suggesting it be amended to provide the same relief from excessive sewer charges for commercial and industrial establishments, as now applies to residential irrigation systems.
(Tabled 10/22/96 pending further report.)

This item remained on the table, however, members requested that the Highway Department be requested to attend the next meeting so the item could be addressed and disposition made.

On motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Alderman Domaingue, it was voted to remove the following item from the table for discussion.

13. Communication from Alderman Sysyn requesting the Committee review the issue of the community center under the Enterprise Community funding.
(Note: report submitted by the Director of Planning dated 5/20/97.)
(Tabled 3/11/96)

Mr. MacKenzie stated that the Enterprise Community Board, after receiving a major grant from the federal government, has now been working close to a year and a half on creating a neighborhood resource center. The purpose of that is primarily for the neighborhood, including job training, job placement, educational programs, and other support activities. The EC Board went through a fairly exhaustive public input program, they then went out to proposals. They received proposals from a couple of collaboratives, being groups or teams of larger organizations who would be interested in running the center. Two proposals came in they were solid proposals. There was a concern by the EC Board and Alderman Sysyn and a couple of others about the exact locations that were being proposed for those centers. Ultimately the Enterprise Community Board selected one of the collaboratives and that included the Southern New Hampshire Services, New Hampshire Charities, New Hampshire Catholic Charities, and HOPE Center and they do have representatives from the collaborative here tonight.

The EC Board want the staff and others to look at the idea of what options there would be for creating a neighborhood center. The staff worked with a number of people including Neighborhood Housing Services to see what options there were. Ultimately it seemed to be the best approach to take some existing city property that is currently tax deeded and there has been no interest in and building a center on that. A center designed specifically for this purpose, and one providing resources for the neighborhood but also helping to revitalize what could be a difficult area. This has been bounced around between a number of groups now including working with the police department and we think we have a workable plan, and a plan that can be funded.

Mr. MacKenzie presented an illustration reflecting conceptually what they had planned for the center. It showed a parcel located on the south side of Lake Avenue, between Union and Pine Streets. They had a tax deeded parcel there that had a couple of vacant buildings on it which were demolished a couple of years ago. It has been a difficult area, but is centrally located to the downtown and the neighborhood of the center part of the city just to the east. They identified a lot and an additional lot that could be about the right size for the type of facility they are looking for. They were looking at a 5,000 to 5,500 square foot facility. The concept plan showed what could go on this type of lot. The lot was 100 feet deep by 150 feet wide, housing such functions as a computer training room, and perhaps an internet resource center. Mr. MacKenzie noted they could have a larger conference/meeting room for a number of purposes but primarily for training, an administrative area with several offices, conference room and a general receptionist information. One of the major purposes is for people coming in either looking for jobs, job training, or want to move up in jobs - maybe they are working two part time jobs and want to find other economic opportunities. So

one of the functions would be an intake area where they would have contacts with businesses, training programs and education programs occurring in the general reception area. They had specifically a job training classroom, an area for different agencies, there were a number of agencies and organizations that wanted to work together as a team for the center. Also one of the wishes of the neighborhood was a child care center that if a parent was looking to go interview for a job for two hours or take a class at night, right now you can find places to put your child in for days as long as you sign up for a long period of time, you don't have a good place to go that you are comfortable with that you can go out looking for jobs even in the afternoon if you are going to go to school. So a small child care area was shown, basically a separate area with a child care office. The police department has also expressed some interest in perhaps in the long term moving their community policing substation, right now they are in a trailer on Beech Street and may be interested in becoming part of this overall operation. Mr. MacKenzie noted that they were looking at options of a one or two story building.

Mr. MacKenzie closed his comments noting that these were the types of functions they would expect to see in the center, it was doable, but would require several actions by the Board. Mr. MacKenzie noted that a rough cost estimate was \$500,000 to \$600,000; that they had an offer by NHS to assist, they had been earmarked \$300,000 in EC money, but had been successful in their fundraising and felt they was a very important project and would be willing to reallocate that money which was going to be used for acquisition of distressed housing, towards this center. So coupled with some other federal funding sources, they believed it was possible to put the financing package together for this project.

Mr. MacKenzie stated the four specific actions that would be required was

- 1) conversion of this tax dedeed property on Lake Avenue through ordinance to a public property;
- 2) purchase of the parcel of land directly to the east of this location (the city does not own a large enough parcel to put the complex on right now) there was an abutting property approximately 50 feet wide which would be appropriate to purchase and it was suggested to purchase it at a price not to exceed \$18,000.
- 3) that a lease be entered into with the winning collaborative at some appropriate price to lease this center for five years, and they would look at whether there would be options for renewing that lease.
- 4) allocating \$140,000 (they have EC funds of about \$500,000 in order to complete the project they would need about \$140,000 more); the monies identified were about \$140,000 to \$141,000 in program income return from NHS.

Alderman Domaingue asked if Alderman Sysyn's original concerns had been addressed. Alderman Sysyn responded yes, they were, she had attended a meeting and her concerns had been addressed.

Alderman Clancy stated it would be city land and the city would have complete control was that correct. Mr. MacKenzie responded this would be a city parcel and a city building; that they would be leasing it to this group to accomplish a city goal.

In response to further question, Mr. MacKenzie advised that they would be leasing it to the collaborative chosen by the EC Board, MCRC - three organizations HOPE Center, New Hampshire Catholic Charities, and the Southern New Hampshire Services as the lead agencies among a number of agencies that would be involved.

Alderman Clancy asked to hear from the representatives.

Mr. Bob Cohlossey, Director of Family Services for New Hampshire Catholic Charities stated they as an organization have always been very much involved and attuned to human services needs throughout Manchester as well as the state of New Hampshire. He further commented on the variety of human services they have provided. They felt that this was an opportunity for the agency to work in conjunction with other human service organizations to take advantage of the request for proposals that they were asked to do to come up with just what they felt could be done on a human services level for the people living in that community. They tried to keep the proposal consistent with what the people in the neighborhood indicated they felt they needed which was primarily opportunities for careers and having the ancillary services available to have them achieve that. It was an opportunity to work together on a program that would benefit the residents of the city.

George Rosato, Executive Director, HOPE Resource Center stated he had been with this process for three years and when the opportunity came to be the lead agency being a small agency they realized what a major undertaking it was, what they had done was invited everybody, but it was the greatest experience he had; that the three agencies bring a uniqueness and a blend that complement each other and have basically covered all of the areas, but it doesn't stop there they would be the lead agencies and other agencies and groups are coming so it was exciting.

Michael O'Shea from Southern New Hampshire Services was also present in support of the project.

Chairman Reiniger stated it was a great project for the center city and for the whole city, and thanked Alderman Sysyn and Alderman Clancy for being great to work with in addressing the center city problems, and this was an example of the work.

Alderman Clancy moved to the recommendations of the Planning Director.
Alderman Domaingue seconded the motion.

Alderman Domaingue questioned charges for the day care. Mr. Rosato responded they would be able to take the expertise of Southern New Hampshire Services and they would be able to access other funding and not charge a fee for the services made available to people of the enterprise community.

Alderman Domaingue questioned whether at some point because of affiliations with churches etc. the federal government would stop the project or request reimbursement of funds stating it was a conflict.

Mr. MacKenzie advised that they had been in close contact with the Department of Housing and Urban Development representative and had been assured there was no problem with the collaborative; that HUD was excited to see the project go forward.

Chairman Reiniger called for a vote. The motion carried.

On motion of Alderman Domaingue, duly seconded by Alderman Clancy, it was voted to remove the following item from the table for discussion.

16. Communication from the Chairman of the Manchester Regional Industrial Foundation submitting a copy of the Foundation's FY1996 Annual Report.
(Tabled 4/29/97)

Alderman Domaingue advised that she had met with persons who had answered her questions on this item and moved to receive and file the communication.
Alderman Clancy seconded the motion. The motion carried.

On motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Alderman Domaingue, it was voted to remove the following item from the table for discussion.

15. Communication from the Assistant Airport Director seeking the Board's approval of a ground lease for an expanded air cargo ramp developed by Cargex Manchester Limited Partnership for a term of 27 years with an option to extend for two successive additional terms of five years each. (Tabled 4/29/97)

Mr. Testa explained that Cargex was a developer who had built most of the cargo areas with private funds. He noted that the proposed lease was concurrent with the master lease agreement for an extension of the Federal Express ramp, it was a spot for the air bus. Mr. Testa noted provisions within the agreement which called for 4 percent increase or the CPI whichever was greater for the out years of 16 to 27 years to protect the city's interest.

Following brief discussion, on motion of Alderman Domaingue, duly seconded by Alderman Clancy, it was voted to recommend approval of the ground lease as requested.

NEW BUSINESS

Communication regarding an agreement for use of city property by Billy's Sports Bar for a dumpster location.

Mr. MacKenzie advised when the city reconstructed the street it showed waste disposal problems. The lot location of the sports bar did not have room for the large dumpster required, and Alderman Clancy noted that the neighborhood was complaining about the garbage problem.

Mr. Arnold advised that he had reviewed the agreement where Billy's would erect a fence and made a couple of suggested changes to it. He noted that the agreement would provide the ability to terminate by either party.

On motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Alderman Domaingue, it was voted to approve the use of the city property through agreement for a dumpster for Billy's Sports Bar as proposed, subject to approval of Solicitor, Highway and Planning.

There being no further business to come before the committee, on motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Alderman Domaingue, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee