

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

March 16, 1999

6:15 PM

Chairman Reiniger called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Reiniger, Wihby, Clancy, Pariseau, Girard

Messrs: R. MacKenzie, J. Taylor, Alderman Shea, M. O'Neil, F. Testa,
Chief Driscoll, Alderman Hirschmann

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.

The Clerk would note that under Resolutions, the second item listed that lists \$25,000 for the PAL Center Acquisition Project should read \$75,000. That is a typographical correction. There is no amendment to be made.

A. Resolutions:

“Amending the 1997 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Three Hundred forty Thousand, Four Hundred twelve Dollars (\$340,412) for the 1997 CIP Project 420108, Violence Against Women Project.”

“Amending the 1999 Community Improvement Program, transferring, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Twenty Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000) for the 1999 CIP 211299 PAL Center Acquisition Project.”

“Amending the 1999 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of One Hundred Seventy Three Thousand, Two Hundred, Twenty Dollars (\$173,220) for the 1999 CIP 410399, Cops More 98 Project.”

“Amending the 1999 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) for the 1999 CIP 420699, STOP Violence Against Women Project.”

“Amending the 1999 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of One Hundred Eleven Thousand, Seven Hundred Dollars (\$111,700) for the 1999 CIP 512099, Pine Island Improvement Project.”

“Amending the 1999 Community Improvement Program, transferring, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of One Hundred Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$120,000) for the 1999 CIP Project 610899, Webster House Renovations.”

“Amending the 1995 and 1999 Community Improvement Programs, transferring, authorizing and appropriating One Hundred and Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$120,000) for the 1999 CIP Project 650799, Architectural for 1037 Elm Street.”

“Amending the 1999 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds for various School Department Projects.”

B. 1995 CIP Budget Authorization:

6.50216 Business Revolving Loan Fund – Revision #2

C. 1996 CIP Budget Authorization:

610403 Dilapidated Building Demolition – Revision #1 -
Closeout

D. 1997 CIP Budget Authorizations:

250627 Accessibility Program – Revision #1 – Closeout

420108 Violence Against Women – Revision #1

610403 Dilapidated Building Demolition – Revision #1 –
Closeout

E. 1999 CIP Budget Authorizations:

211299	PAL Center Acquisition
410399	Cops More 98
420699	STOP Violence Against Women
420699	Local Law Enforcement Block Grant – Revision #1
511899	JFK Coliseum Rehab.-Phase III
512099	Pine Island Improvement Project
610699	Acquisition of Distressed Real Estate – Revision #1
610899	Webster House Renovations
650799	Architectural for 1037 Elm Street

- F. Communication from the Planning Director recommending an allocation of \$6,000 to Intown Manchester and \$20,000 for the Parks Department be approved to replace stage sections as may be required to the Veterans Park Performance Pavilion, should there be sufficient funding.

HAVING READ THE CONSENT AGENDA, ON MOTION OF ALDERMAN WIHBY, DULY SECONDED BY ALDERMAN GIRARD, IT WAS VOTED TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA.

Alderman Pariseau stated I have a question on the item dealing with CIP project 610899, Webster House Renovations. No, it is 1037 Elm Street. We are contributing \$120,000 out of CIP. Is that going to remain a non-profit entity or what is the deal?

Mr. MacKenzie stated that will actually be discussed on the next agenda item, number 4. Jay Taylor is here to make a presentation to further detail that. That money for 1037 Elm Street is actually going to be included in some other monies that have already been appropriated.

Alderman Girard stated I thought he was talking about the Webster House.

Chairman Reiniger asked, Alderman Pariseau, is your question about the Webster House or the Elm Street Project.

Alderman Pariseau answered I thought it was the Webster House, but it is not.

Alderman Girard stated if Mr. MacKenzie could explain the Webster House item, I am interested in that.

Mr. MacKenzie replied sure. They had actually made a request in the FY2000 budget. The staff did review that and there was not necessarily funding in the next year's budget, but there were some available funds under this year's budget under HUD CDBG monies. This would be a qualifying project. Originally, they did request a grant as I understand it, but we are looking more towards funding that out of home funds as a repayable loan to assist Webster House in making renovations and a small addition. Bill Jabjiniak is here and probably knows more details about that project as he worked with them if you have any more questions.

Alderman Girard asked these are going to be home funds then, Mr. MacKenzie.

Mr. MacKenzie answered that is correct.

Alderman Girard asked what is the payback term of this loan.

Mr. MacKenzie asked Mr. Jabjiniak to answer that.

Mr. Jabjiniak stated the payback terms have not been established other than that it is to be structured as a loan at this time.

Alderman Girard asked, Mr. Jabjiniak, for what other uses could these home funds be allocated.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered they are restricted to housing usage.

Alderman Girard asked what sorts of strings come with these home funds.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered long-term affordability being the biggest strength.

Alderman Girard asked long-term being 20 years.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered 15.

Alderman Girard asked why would we grant this as a loan given the specific use of these funds. Why would we have this set-up as a loan rather than as a grant?

Mr. Jabjiniak answered I think it was something that was decided by the Mayor. He asked that the money be given as a loan.

Alderman Girard stated these home funds if I understand them correctly can only be used, as he said, for housing but specifically I think they target these funds toward the provision of moderate and low-income housing. Is that correct?

Mr. Jabjiniak replied yes it is.

Alderman Girard asked so to be quite candid, I think the City probably shoulders enough of a burden in that aspect and I would like to ask that this money be considered for the Webster House as a grant and not a loan seeing as we don't have...I am sure we could come up with all sorts of other uses for these funds but I think this might be one of the better ones that is not going to stick the taxpayers with federally subsidized low income housing or federally mandated low income housing for the next 15 years in any neighborhood in the City.

Alderman Girard moved that the CIP Project 610899, Webster House Renovations, be a grant and not a loan. There was no second.

Alderman Pariseau stated in light of the fact that the Mayor asked this Board to look at the non-profit status of some entities that we ought to leave it, as far as today is concerned, as a loan. I don't agree with just handing out the almighty dollar and nothing coming back.

Alderman Girard stated Alderman Pariseau certainly you and I have had enough discussions to know that we agree, for the most part, on that issue. However, that policy request from the Mayor notwithstanding, he has seen fit to make several funding recommendations in his FY2000 CIP, which we are going to have to deal with in one way or another. Normally, I would agree with your sentiment, however, given the very narrow potential use of these home funds and given that I don't believe that this really sets a precedent for the City, I would just as soon see it be a grant because I believe that in the 115 years that the Webster House has been here, it has never come to the City before, it will probably never come to the City again and these are funds that can only be used for low income housing, Alderman, and frankly I think the City has enough of that.

Alderman Pariseau stated but if we were to give this loan of \$120,000 to the Neighborhood Housing Services, at least they upgrade dilapidated homes and people buy them and they are placed on the tax roles.

Alderman Girard replied I agree but this is a leftover FY99 dollar amount that is not committed.

Alderman Pariseau stated well we can amend it to put it in the FY2000 CIP budget.

Alderman Girard replied I hate to pit one group against another. If you don't want to second the motion to have it be a grant rather than a loan, you don't have to.

Alderman Clancy asked, Bill, did you say that this was CDBG money.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered no it is home funds.

Alderman Clancy asked and the Webster House qualifies for that.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered yes, they do.

Chairman Reiniger stated I am looking at Page 3a and the section that talks about the resolution and I don't see the word loan used. In other words it doesn't seem to specify whether it is a grant or a loan in the resolution.

Mr. Jabjiniak replied the resolution doesn't specify.

Chairman Reiniger asked so what does that mean, that it is left to the discretion of your office.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered ordinarily; it is not included in the resolution whether it is a loan or a grant. It is pretty much an administration decision to give it out as a loan and that is what we were instructed to do and that is what we are going to do. If you decide otherwise, then we will go back and do that. It is something that is not usually included in the resolution.

Chairman Reiniger asked so what Alderman Girard would want to do is specify that it is a grant in the resolution.

Alderman Girard answered yes and I have another question for Mr. Jabjiniak. If these home funds were to be given to Neighborhood Housing Services as Alderman Pariseau has suggested, could it be used for their home ownership programs or would it only be able to be used by them to renovate property that they will hold on to as low and moderate income rental property?

Mr. Jabjiniak replied it could be used for both.

Alderman Girard stated so if they decided to renovate a building and sell that building as an owner occupied unit, would it have to remain low income housing because of the restrictions of the funds.

Mr. Jabjiniak replied yes.

Alderman Girard stated I am not so sure that given the burden that the City already carries in that area that that would be the best use of these dollars. Again, because it is a very narrow use of the funds, I would personally like to see this be a grant to the Webster House.

Chairman Reiniger asked the Clerk for some clarification.

Deputy Clerk Johnson stated you have already passed the budget authorization and the resolution and then the discussion took place after the passage. At this point, somebody would have to move to rescind that action on this particular item. Normally, if there were loans in the past in the budget authorizations, they were so indicated on the budget authorization itself and this one does not do so. At this point, it would be an administrative direction, I think, on the Committee's part.

Alderman Clancy asked this isn't going to deprive anybody in the center city area from taking a loan out is it.

Mr. Jabjiniak answered no. Neighborhood Housing Services is funded at this point.

Alderman Girard stated well if a vote has been taken, perhaps the Committee could take an action to direct the Planning Office or the Mayor's Office, whatever would be appropriate, to see that this money is given as a grant and not as a loan. If the resolution has already been passed, then perhaps we can condition the passage.

Alderman Girard moved that the CIP Project 610899, Webster House Renovations, be a grant and not a loan. Chairman Reiniger duly seconded the motion. Chairman Reiniger called for a vote. The motion failed with Aldermen Wihby, Clancy and Pariseau duly recorded in opposition.

Chairman Reiniger addressed Item 4 of the agenda:

Communication from Jay Taylor presenting recommendations for development and disposition of 1037-1045 Elm Street.

Deputy Clerk Johnson noted that if the Committee desired, the motions would be to:

- 1) Recommend to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen that the City Solicitor and MEDO Director be authorized to negotiate a final development agreement with DASS Development Corporation for the rehabilitation, operation and purchase of the 1037-1045 Elm Street property; and further that the Mayor be authorized to execute such agreement for and on behalf of the City of Manchester subject to the review and approval of the City Solicitor.
- 2) Recommend to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen that in accordance with RSA 80:80 the Mayor be authorized to dispose of certain property situated at 1037-1045 Elm Street and known as Map 9, Lot 11, by executing deeds releasing all rights, title, interest, or claims in said property. Said property formerly owned by Richard S. Bandowski was acquired by the City of Manchester by virtue of Tax Collector's deed dated April 8, 1992 and recorded in the Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds on April 10, 1992, in Volume 5330 page 0460.
- 3) That the Committee recommend that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen find 1037-1045 Elm Street property surplus to City needs; and further find that it is in the best interest of the public to sell such property to DASS Development corporation subject to execution of a Development Agreement for such property establishing a 15 year lease term, and other conditions as set forth herein. That Committee recommend that such sale be executed within six months of expiration of the development agreement at a price of \$100,000.00, a price determined to be fair market value by the Board of Assessors. The Committee would note that such finding is based on the property having been a blight to the downtown area for over seven years, no other interested parties having come forward to develop such property, federal funds are now available to assist in creating jobs for area residents, the building is of historical significance and DASS Development has agreed to maintain the façade of the building; and the property once developed will return to the tax roles of the City.
- 4) That the Committee recommend to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen that the Finance Officer be authorized to credit tax deed accounts as deemed necessary; and that the Mayor, Finance Officer, Planning Director, City Solicitor and Tax Collector be authorized to proceed with disposition and preparation of such documents as may be required to consummate the terms of the disposition.
- 5) That the Committee advise the Board that it has approved the enclosed ordinance and recommends same be referred to the Committee on Bills on Second Reading for technical review.

Alderman Wihby so moved to the above recommendations. Alderman Clancy duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Girard stated, Mr. Taylor, I am afraid that I did not receive this document so I haven't had a chance to take a look at it. Chairman Reiniger informed me that it was delivered on Friday, but I did not get it. In a nutshell, what are we doing here? Are we giving the building and the grant? What are we doing here?

It was noted by the Clerk that the items Alderman Girard indicated he did not receive were attached to his agenda.

Mr. Taylor replied since you are familiar with the background of how we got this property and what the checkered history of it has been I won't bore you with the sordid details of all of that, but essentially what we are doing here is providing for a 15 year lease of the property. The City will continue to own the property and lease it for a term of 15 years to the developers. The reason for that is the Federal grant that we got from the Economic Development Administration requires that the property stay either in the ownership of the City directly or by a qualified non-profit corporation. Since these developers are for profit, we cannot sell it to them until after the 15-year term when those restrictions expire.

Alderman Girard asked and this is a grant from the Economic Development Authority.

Mr. Taylor answered the Economic Development Administration.

Alderman Girard asked does this grant have any nice little strings other than ownership.

Mr. Taylor answered there are lots of strings and lots of hoops to jump through and we have been trying to do that. There are restrictions on how you spend the money, when you spend the money. This is very similar to the restrictions that are applied to CDBG funds. There are very similar kinds of restraints.

Alderman Girard asked are we taking a look then, at having to turn this into low-income housing.

Mr. Taylor answered no. The proposal here is to develop this property for retail and office space strictly. Housing is not an eligible funding item for EDA because EDA funds are tied to job creation.

Alderman Girard stated so the City is going to retain ownership of the property and is going to lease it to the developer. Now since we own the property, we obviously aren't going to collect any taxes.

Mr. Taylor replied don't make that assumption because the proposal is that the developer will pay taxes. As soon as their lease takes effect, they will begin to pay taxes and over the term of the 15 year lease we are estimating, assuming you get a 2% or 3% increase in taxes every year, the total taxes that will be paid by the developers over that term will be roughly \$1 million.

Alderman Girard asked over that 15 years.

Mr. Taylor answered correct.

Alderman Girard asked is that going to be assessed as a payment in lieu of taxes. I am interested to know how this is going to work.

Mr. Taylor answered they will be taxable, it won't be in lieu of, the property will become taxable as soon as the lease is signed. When the City signs a lease with a private entity for a city-owned property, it becomes taxable and that is a statutory requirement.

Alderman Girard stated so basically whatever the assessment is times the tax rate is what the building is going to be paying. We are giving them \$1 million to do the redevelopment of the building?

Mr. Taylor replied let's review the financing so that it is very clear because this has been somewhat of a moving target. I intended to go through the financing anyway because it is important that the Board understand exactly what we are proposing here so there will be no questions later on as to what we have done. First of all, the estimated project development costs are \$3.2 million. The way the financing breaks down is that the developers are going to put \$1 million worth of equity in which we assume they are going to borrow from a lender. The Economic Development Administration Grant of \$4 million goes in as a grant, not a loan, because it was granted to the City for that purpose. In the FY2000 CIP budget, there is an item of \$1 million in CDBG money to go into this project as a loan and at the end of the day we had a \$200,000 shortfall and the Manchester Development Corporation has agreed to put in \$200,000 as a loan under the same terms that the City money is going to be put in at and these are no interest loans for 15 years. They will be repaid out of net cash flow from the project and any balance of those mortgages or those notes not repaid during the 15 year term will come back to the City/MDC at the end of the 15 year term as a balloon payment.

Alderman Girard asked so they are going to pay them, regardless, over the 15-year period.

Mr. Taylor answered right. There will be promissory notes and there will, in effect, be a mortgage. Now let me just clarify one thing. On the \$1 million that the City is going to put in as a CDBG note, we have had some continuing discussions about this project and the costs have escalated somewhat for a couple of reasons. Number one because of the fact that the developers are going to have to pay Davis Bacon wages because of the Federal money involved which probably adds somewhere between 15% and 20% to the cost of labor. That is how we got up to the \$3.2 million instead of the \$3 million we were originally talking about. In addition to that, in early discussions we had talked about a fair market value of the building of \$50,000 when, in fact, now the Assessors because of some recent sales in the downtown area have put a letter in this package which states that in their view the building is worth \$100,000. The developer has stood still for a number of these increases, but there is a limit to what the cash flow on this project will allow so what they are proposing is to pay back \$950,000 of that \$1 million just so this is clear. The developers are here is somebody wants to talk to them about that.

Alderman Girard asked, Mr. Taylor, there has been a lot of discussion about the spin-off effect on the downtown economy of building a civic center. I guess my question to you as a development professional who has been in the City for a number of years now, is whether or not this building is too far gone to benefit from that effect.

Mr. Taylor answered if you recall, about two years ago, we did go out for a public offering. We got a response, which I don't think anybody on the Board thought was worthy of further consideration. The current developers, by the way, did make a proposal but we received it about a day too late so we didn't open it. So, they were interested at the time. I should add that as a caveat to this. Secondly, if you recall just recently the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce expressed an interest in this project and went over it with a fine tooth comb and decided that the numbers don't make sense to them. I think that based on our past experience, clearly this is a very thin project in terms of the numbers and the cash flow. If we were to let the building sit there for another year or six months, my guess is that if the building goes through another winter without anything being done to it, it may get to the point where it is so far gone that it will be totally useless and I think that would be a travesty for the City.

Alderman Girard asked you don't think that even with speculation in the downtown real estate market caused by the pending construction of the civic center that this building would be viable under any other terms than these.

Mr. Taylor answered I think it is close to being uneconomic without the grant that the EDA is providing and I should also indicate that if we don't begin construction by September 3 of this year we lose that grant.

Alderman Pariseau asked wouldn't it be to the City's advantage if we were to take that \$1 million EDA grant and the CDBG funds of \$1 million and rehabilitate that building and sell it afterwards instead of letting it go for \$100,000 now and giving them this \$2.2 million.

Mr. Taylor answered that is a consideration. I guess my question would be who from the City would be doing all of this stuff. I think if you look at the City staff now, we are spread pretty thin and if you were to ask somebody to administer directly a project like that, I certainly am not qualified to supervise a construction project like that and I am not sure the City has anybody that would do it.

Alderman Pariseau stated well I am sure that if we were aware that we were going to save \$1.9 million that we would find somebody to do it.

Mr. Taylor replied this is a \$3 million project and if you put \$2 million into a \$3 million project you still have a shortfall and where does the other \$1 million come from.

Alderman Pariseau responded well I don't know why they are going to \$3.2 million.

Mr. Taylor stated that is the estimate of what it is going to take to renovate that building. It is a disaster. When they are through demolishing in there, the only thing that is going to be left is four walls and a roof.

Alderman Pariseau stated getting back to your statement about taxes, the scenario that we have in front of us is payment in lieu of taxes. Is this after the 15 years or will it start from day one?

Mr. Taylor answered it will start from day one.

Alderman Pariseau asked what will that payment be.

Mr. Taylor answered it is not payment in lieu of taxes. It is going to be taxable as if it were owned privately so it will be assessed by the Assessors at its market value.

Alderman Pariseau stated what parking lot are we going to use for the spaces we are promising these people.

Mr. Taylor replied we haven't defined a specific lot. We have said that we would try to reserve those spaces in a lot or lots adjacent to the property. Now that could be one of three locations. It could be the Canal Street Garage, the Victory Garage or the Hartnett Parking Lot and that has yet to be worked out. That will be one of the details that we will get into in the development agreement.

Alderman Clancy asked the City has owned this property for seven years right.

Mr. Taylor answered I think we took it in 1992.

Alderman Clancy stated we have only had, to my knowledge, one other person interested in this building right.

Mr. Taylor replied yes and we all know what happened to that one.

Alderman Clancy stated and these people have had two other projects in town. One on Canal Street and one at the old Pearl Street School. I went through both of them myself and they have done a wonderful job. The building is just sitting there and it is about time somebody did something with the empty building. If these people want to come in and nobody else has come forward to renovate it and they want to renovate it and put it back on the tax role even though it is going to take a little longer than I anticipated, I am for it.

Mr. Taylor stated I think the bottom line here is that the City of Manchester is trying to encourage private interest to invest in the City and in the downtown specifically and to improve their properties by providing the façade improvement program and other initiatives and here we sit as the City of Manchester with probably the worst looking property in the whole downtown area and I think we need to do something about that.

Chairman Reiniger stated I believe this is a very important and exciting project for the downtown. This is a key building on Elm Street that has to be renovated and I also have to say that DASS has proven to be an excellent corporation and they did a great job working on the building on the corner of Canal and Brook Street. I have a lot of confidence in DASS pursuing this project.

Alderman Girard asked, Mr. Taylor, have the developers been able to give you an assessment of the value of the building once the renovations are complete.

Mr. Taylor answered they haven't wanted to commit themselves, but we have been using a figure of around \$2 million.

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

Chairman Reiniger addressed Item 5 of the agenda:

Report by the CIP Sub-Committee submitting their findings and recommendations relative to the Manchester Transit Authority matter.

Alderman Pariseau moved to send the report to the full Board. Alderman Clancy duly seconded the motion. Chairman Reiniger called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Reiniger thanked the sub-Committee for their work.

Chairman Reiniger noted that there is a group of people here regarding the Prouts Park issue and with the Committee's approval we will take up that item next.

Communication from Deborah Cote seeking CIP funding for improvements to Prouts Park.

Alderman Pariseau moved to refer this item to the Mayor's CIP budget.

Chairman Reiniger stated we are not going to take motions tonight on any of the changes to the CIP. We will do that next week. While there is a crowd here tonight I thought we could just listen to them.

Alderman Shea stated with your permission, I would like to have Ron Johnson take a few minutes to discuss the plan.

Alderman Girard stated I don't mean to interrupt my colleague from Ward 7, however, I think it would be more appropriate to have that discussion when we consider the actual budget items however if Mrs. Cote would like to speak about her letter, I would be more than happy to entertain that.

Alderman Shea replied you have the letter. May Mike O'Neil speak briefly.

Mr. O'Neil stated I live at 293 Young Street at the corner of Cypress. That is at the south end of Prouts Park. I would like to mention that I am a third generation in the home that I live in and there are others here tonight in our contingency who have been neighbors in the park area for at least as long, if not longer, than I have. So, there is a certain amount of longevity involved here. We are here tonight to discuss a few of the problems that are happening to Prouts Park. We choose to call it the decline of Prouts Park and I would just like to have you keep in mind

one thing while I address some of these concerns tonight and that is that Prouts Park is not only a playground, a neighborhood park, but it is also a dedicated athletic field although there are no funds apparently to maintain any of the aforementioned. My remarks tonight will be brief. The limited playground equipment that is at Prouts Park is old, rusted and antiquated at best. None of it meets Federal guidelines by anybody's standards. There used to be six swings, then there were four and now there are two. Basically they are metal strips that are hung by rusted chains. The slide, an old metal slide, has a platform at the top and the rails are missing and it is just a matter of time before a child falls off and hurts itself. The main concern we have is with the basketball court at Prouts. Fifteen years ago, when the courts were put in they were a wonderful thing and the neighborhood kids used them everyday. Well, in the last 10 years the urban scene as we all know has changed and the people that now use the basketball court are not necessarily from our neighborhood. They come in cars; they come from all over the City and not even necessarily from our town. They have no respect for the park or the neighbors and this is very evident by the gang graffiti that is everywhere, the broken glass and the street language that is, well we all know what the street language is. The tennis court that is there now is a parking lot now. The tennis court has never been lined for parking spaces and this creates confusion. It wouldn't take much to put some lines on the parking lot and this would square up a lot of the confusion. Also, the basketball court could be used for additional parking and would relieve congestion in the small side streets that surround Prouts Park. The basketball court, in our opinion, brings in the wrong element. There are people in there late at night playing loud music, drinking beer and using foul language. This goes on well after the park curfew and it is not the neighborhood kids who are doing it. It is people from out of this neighborhood and like I said not even from this town. I would like to talk a minute about the sprinkler system that was put in at Prouts Park approximately 12 years ago at a cost of \$15,500. I remember it very distinctly because I was excited by it. I live right across the street so I know every shovel of dirt that has ever been turned in that park in the last 40 years. The problem with the sprinkler system is that it was never activated. Not turned on, not even once. Now Parks & Recreation used to come and have a guy manually turn the sprinklers on and it helped but at this point, the park being used as heavily as it is with the Babe Ruth League, the Bears Football League and now the Manchester Memorial Girl's Field Hockey, the park is reduced to pretty much a dust bowl at this point. We feel that for X number of dollars that it would take to get the sprinkler system up and running it would alleviate a lot of the dust bowl problems that everybody that surrounds the park has to deal with all the time. Lets talk about the Babe Ruth League for a minute. The Babe Ruth League is a wonderful thing and as the saying goes, a kid on the field is a kid off the streets. We all agree, but there is a certain problem with the Babe Ruth League, it generates a tremendous amount of trash. On any given

weekend during May, June and up until the Fourth of July, there can be as many as eight ballgames in that park in one weekend. This creates a lot of garbage and it is more than the two or three barrels that are down there can handle.

Chairman Reiniger interrupted, Sir, that is very helpful testimony but we have a full agenda and unfortunately we are under a time constraint.

Mr. O'Neil replied I can wrap this up in about 30 seconds. I would just like to say that we all have our individual concerns about what is going on with Prouts Park. The one thing that unites us all is the fact that our property values are dropping and our tax rate is not. As you all speculate that the civic center in Manchester will have a ripple effect in that neighborhood, cleaning it up, we feel that improvements to Prouts Park would also have a ripple effect and bring the pride and marketability back to our neighborhood that we once had. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Chairman Reiniger stated Alderman Shea has worked very hard on this and he has already given me a budget proposal. I see that Ron Johnson has a diagram of the park. If you could get all of the Committee members a copy of that, it would be helpful. We will be meeting next Tuesday to vote on proposed changes and amendments to the CIP budget. That meeting will begin at 5:30 PM. Alderman Shea has done a great job in getting us the information. There will also be a public hearing on the Mayor's proposed CIP budget next Monday. That will be the first step and then the Committee will meet the following night.

Chairman Reiniger addressed Item 6 of the agenda:

Communication from Alderman Hirschmann seeking continued development of Phase II of the West Memorial Field as part of the upcoming CIP budgeting process.

Alderman Wihby moved to receive and file this item. Alderman Pariseau duly seconded the motion. Chairman Reiniger called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Reiniger addressed Item 7 of the agenda:

Communication from David Bush, Assistant Airport Director, submitting the second amendment to the Hertz Rental Car Lease Agreement that adds 25,126 square feet to the leased premises affording space to expand and rebuild the rental car service and storage facilities.

On motion of Alderman Wihby, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to accept the amendment.

Chairman Reiniger stated I should note that the Airport Director is here to discuss some items that will be coming up in the CIP process. He is in the process of leaving himself and cannot make our next meeting.

Mr. Testa stated I can come to the meeting next Tuesday night.

Chairman Reiniger addressed Item 8 of the agenda:

Communication from the Chief of Police seeking preliminary approval for the development of an eighth of an acre parcel of City-owned land located near the Animal Shelter on Dunbarton Road for the building of a small boarding and animal care facility to house the developing Equestrian Patrol Unit.

Alderman Girard moved the item for discussion. Alderman Clancy duly seconded.

Chief Driscoll stated when it was on the original agenda it said 8 acres, now it says an eighth of an acre. Actually it is .8 acres for the record. We have, for a long time, been looking at this project. We are looking at the feasibility and in order to do it believe that we have to have a site. We met with Frank Thomas and Ken Rhodes from CLD. This site has been identified as available. It is convenient. It works for us and we would hope that you would approve it. If you have any questions about the program itself, I would ask Deputy Chief Duffy to respond to them as it is basically his project.

Alderman Girard stated I have gotten more phone calls on this than I have gotten a whole lot of issues so I have several questions to ask. Some of the questions that I have really are allying the practicality of having horses. What use does having horses serve that cannot be served by other means?

Deputy Chief Duffy replied I could probably spend a great deal of time answering your question, but your question really cuts to the heart of the matter. Essentially a horse patrol does a number of different things. It gives high exposure to the Police Department and to the City. It gives us an alternate method of patrol, particularly in areas like the river area and the park that is being developed down there. It gives us a presence in areas that might not be accessible to other entities like a cruiser. It gives us an excellent public relations tool. It is basically a program that combines the best aspect of community policing, getting out into the

community and interacting with the people in a way that the people can see an officer as obviously the officer is very visible on the back of a horse, and as such the community policing aspect of it is enhanced greatly.

Alderman Girard responded so basically you are saying it is a visibility issue.

Deputy Chief Duffy stated well that is one aspect of it. It is also an enforcement issue.

Alderman Girard stated several of the questions that I have gotten relate to why is it more effective to have officers on horseback as opposed to putting a couple of more bike patrols out.

Deputy Chief Duffy replied well they are not mutually exclusive. We are going to continue with the bike patrols as well. This is not going to take the place of any particular program.

Alderman Girard stated no one is suggesting that. I think what the suggestion was is would the City be better served by additional bike patrols instead of horse patrols.

Deputy Chief Robinson replied I don't think so. The civic center is one of the things that really kind of drove this too when we were thinking about crowds and so forth at the civic center. We are thinking about the areas that are being developed in the City. We are thinking about the downtown area. We are thinking about the schools getting out and there is no other presence in law enforcement that can compare to a presence of a mounted officer. We are, as nearly as we can tell, the largest City in New England that doesn't have a horse patrol. This is something that we have been looking at for a long time.

Alderman Girard asked and you are talking about two horses.

Deputy Chief Duffy answered yes, Sir.

Alderman Girard asked believe it or not several of the questions I have gotten had to do with how you plan on cleaning up after the horses when they are on patrol.

Deputy Chief Duffy answered that is a good question. We have a number of different ideas for that and a number of different people we have thought about but as far as the operations and in terms of how you would clean up, how you groom the horse, how you maintain the horse and indeed how you use the horse, is all regulated by associations and laws that pertain strictly to horses that are utilized for work in any sense. Not just police work, but in any sense. In addition, there is

a widespread organization of mounted patrols right here in New England with a lot of bylaws. We are not going to go into this blind. We are going to go to the best departments and have them get all of these questions answered and proceed from there.

Alderman Girard asked we are not going to have to have a street sweeper traveling behind them, in other words.

Deputy Chief Duffy answered guaranteed, no.

Alderman Girard stated there have also been concerns and issues raised regarding who will care for the horses. The line of thought seems to be that the animal control officers, and I wholeheartedly agree, are pretty overwhelmed by what they have to do now. Are you going to need to hire additional staff in order to care for these horses?

Chief Driscoll replied I would like to answer that in that there have been many questions about that. We have had a number of people come forward since we first started talking about it. There are all kinds of volunteers from the west side and from the east side who would like to participate in it and we see it as something that is very reasonable to do. We would like to involve the public in it. There are some concerns about the animal control officer but you can be assured that he will continue to do his duties and responsibilities as he does them now. That doesn't mean that he wouldn't participate in some aspect of this because he would. He is right adjacent to the site that we are interested in.

Alderman Girard asked are there officers on the force who are currently trained to ride horses or are we going to have to train somebody to do this.

Chief Driscoll answered you would have to train both the horses and the riders.

Alderman Girard asked and you are not talking about hiring any new officers.

Chief Driscoll answered no.

Alderman Girard asked do we have maintenance costs for the horses.

Chief Driscoll answered certainly. They have to eat, they have to be shod, and they have to have veterinarian care. There are a variety of different things.

Alderman Girard asked and have you outlined any of those costs.

Chief Driscoll answered yes we have. Potentially it could cost up to \$7,000 a year to maintain a horse.

Alderman Girard asked if I recall correctly you are going to buy the horses through Federal grants.

Chief Driscoll answered we have a Federal grant that will allow us to either purchase the horses or build a facility or buy the equipment that is needed. However, the Federal grant at this moment can't be used for new construction.

Alderman Girard asked so what sort of up front costs is the City looking at to start this program, grants aside.

Chief Driscoll answered very little. Probably none.

Alderman Girard asked what happens if one of the horses passes away. How much does it cost to replace a horse?

Chief Driscoll answered we expect that we will pay a minimal amount to purchase the animals. Should there be a crisis, I would expect that we could probably get an animal donated. We have had people tell us that is a possibility.

Alderman Pariseau asked what are we going to do with the bikes if we hire horses.

Chief Driscoll answered we are going to continue to use the bicycles.

Alderman Pariseau asked and the primary purpose of getting an equestrian team is because of the civic center.

Chief Driscoll answered no; it is to police downtown.

Deputy Chief Duffy stated I think what I said, Alderman, is that was one of the forces that drove it. We have been thinking about this for years even before the civic center was proposed.

Alderman Pariseau asked how do you plan to transport the horses from Dunbarton Road to Elm Street.

Chief Driscoll answered in a trailer.

Alderman Pariseau asked how much is this all going to cost anyway.

Chief Driscoll answered I can't tell you the total cost of the package. We have a fairly significant grant.

Alderman Pariseau asked what happens when the grant dries up.

Chief Driscoll answered well there would be an annual fee to maintain the animals.

Alderman Pariseau asked and how much is that annual fee. If you get two horses and then you go to four horses and then you get eight horses.

Chief Driscoll answered just two horses, Sir.

Alderman Pariseau asked maximum for how many years.

Deputy Chief Duffy answered the general life of the horses, depending on how old you buy them and what breed they are, is 10-15 years.

Alderman Girard asked do we have a trailer.

Chief Driscoll answered no, but we can purchase a trailer out of that grant money.

Alderman Pariseau asked and how much is that going to be.

Deputy Chief Duffy answered \$4,900.

Alderman Pariseau asked does that come out of this grant.

Chief Driscoll answered yes.

Alderman Pariseau asked how much is the grant.

Deputy Chief Duffy answered \$30,000.

Alderman Pariseau asked how much is the building going to cost you.

Chief Driscoll answered it depends on how that is approached. The first issue is to identify whether or not the land is available and whether or not we would build a building. We would be interested in locating a building and having it moved there as opposed to building a new building.

Alderman Clancy asked from what I understand, all you are looking for is the .8 acre over there and the rest you can handle yourself.

Chief Driscoll answered yes.

Alderman Wihby moved to approve the request. Alderman Clancy duly seconded the motion. The motion carried with Alderman Pariseau duly recorded in opposition.

Chairman Reiniger addressed Item 9 of the agenda:

Communication from the Public Works Director seeking authorization to proceed with necessary negotiations and purchase of a parcel of land bordering the easterly side of Brown Avenue belonging to Blue Cross/Blue Shield of NH with respect to the Brown Avenue Widening Project.

On motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Wihby it was voted to approve this request.

Chairman Reiniger addressed Item 10 of the agenda:

Communication from the Board of School Committee advising that they have declared the Brown School building surplus to their needs and are returning same to the City.

Alderman Clancy moved to refer this to the Planning Department for a recommendation regarding utilizing the building for an elderly center and to house the West Side library. Alderman Pariseau duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Girard stated I opposed accepting this building and the concerns that I have regarding where we are going with schools and whether or not that space really is surplus have not been allayed. I don't think we should be making any recommendations as to what use that building should be put to because there are too many outstanding things that need to be addressed. I would oppose that.

Chairman Reiniger called for a vote. The motion carried with Alderman Girard being duly recorded in opposition.

Chairman Reiniger addressed Item 11 of the agenda:

Communication from John Cooperider, Chair of the Hillcrest Terrace Resident Council requesting that a traffic signal be installed at the intersection of Hackett Hill Road and Front Street (Route 3A).

Alderman Girard stated I think Alderman Hirschmann's intent is to get this addressed in this year's CIP, however, Alderman Clancy I would like to ask if the Traffic Committee still reviews all signal requests and makes a priority list and sends it to CIP. This was a dual referral. Has your Committee had an opportunity to act on this yet?

Alderman Clancy replied no.

Chairman Reiniger stated it is a report of the Committee tonight recommending that a request for a traffic signal be installed.

Alderman Clancy stated we have two other traffic signals that are being looked at besides this one.

Alderman Girard asked did the Committee establish any priorities.

Alderman Clancy answered not yet.

Alderman Wihby stated this is an item tonight for the full Board to approve but you don't have a priority list.

Alderman Clancy replied well we had two other locations in the City.

Alderman Hirschmann stated if you read the budget packet, the CIP book that was just handed out, this traffic intersection is addressed and Mr. MacKenzie could fill you in on this. It is budgeted to happen in FY200.

Alderman Clancy stated so is the one on River Road and Webster Street.

Alderman Hirschmann asked could the Planning Director address this. This has to get done.

Alderman Wihby asked if it is already in the budget, why is it here.

Alderman Hirschmann stated because 100 constituents in my ward tried to make sure that it gets done this year.

Alderman Girard moved to refer the item to the FY2000 CIP budget considerations. Alderman Clancy duly seconded the motion. Chairman Reiniger called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Reiniger addressed Item 13 of the agenda:

Communication from Attorney John Lassey, Wadleigh, Starr & Peters, requesting the City pay closer attention to pedestrian safety on streets and sidewalks in the Downtown area after snow and ice storms.

Alderman Pariseau stated for all that we do downtown, Mr. Chairman, I think these people ought to be sent a letter. If we don't get there at the first drop of a snowflake, they should clean their own sidewalks. I do mine. I don't know who these people think they are.

Alderman Girard moved that this item be referred to the Highway Department for a response. Alderman Pariseau duly seconded the motion. Chairman Reiniger called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman Reiniger addressed Item 14 of the agenda:

Communication from Kimon Zachos, President of the Board of Trustees of The Currier Gallery of Art, requesting the repavement of Heather Street.

Alderman Pariseau stated we should refer this to Highway and ask if they can contribute something to the repavement of Heather Street. They knew they were going to have this problem when they converted that Lloyd Wright House to a museum type thing and Heather Street wasn't built for all that traffic.

Alderman Wihby stated Heather Street was in that condition before they went there. They didn't contribute to it.

Alderman Girard stated I will agree with Alderman Wihby, however, the Frank Lloyd Wright House is one of the City's premiere attractions and I think it is a shame that visitors to the City see that street the way it is never mind that residents there have to endure that street. That is one of the worst streets I think I have seen.

Chairman Reiniger asked is this street on the priority list to be repaved.

On motion of Alderman Wihby, duly seconded by Alderman Girard, it was voted to refer this to the Highway Department.

Chairman Reiniger addressed Item 15 of the agenda:

Petition for discontinuance of Lake Ave. South Back Street.

On motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau it was voted to recommend that this petition be referred to a road hearing to be scheduled at the next available date determined by the City Clerk.

Chairman Reiniger addressed Item 16 of the agenda:

Petition for discontinuance of a portion of Sumpter Avenue.

On motion of Alderman Wihby, duly seconded by Alderman Girard it was voted to recommend that this petition be referred to a road hearing to be scheduled at the next available date determined by the City Clerk.

TABLED ITEMS

Communication from the Chief Sanitary Engineer submitting Amendment No. 3 to the Londonderry/Manchester Intermunicipal Agreement for Sewer Service.

On motion of Alderman Girard, duly seconded by Alderman Wihby, it was voted to remove this item from the table.

Alderman Girard moved to receive and file this item. Alderman Pariseau duly seconded the motion. Chairman Reiniger called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, on motion of Alderman Girard, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee