

COMMITTEE ON LANDS AND BUILDINGS

October 18, 2010

4:30 PM

Chairman Osborne called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Osborne, Lopez, Shea, Roy, Greazzo.

Messrs.: R. Colbert Boisvert, A. Vachon, K. Sheppard, P. Goucher,
L. LaFreniere

Chairman Osborne addressed item 3 of the agenda:

3. Presentation by Peter Capano, Chief of Parks, Recreation & Cemetery, regarding the McIntyre Ski Area Master Plan.

Mr. Kevin Sheppard, Director of Public Works, stated Peter couldn't make it here tonight; I'm just going to introduce Ross Boisvert to my right. He's from the McIntyre Ski Area. Andy Vachon to my far right is our Enterprise Manager. On a yearly basis for the contract for McIntyre Ski Area, the owner of the McIntyre Ski Area has to present the Parks and Recreation Department a Master Plan or a plan for the upcoming year. If they present that we can give it approval, but we thought it best to present it to the Committee for your information, just so you know what's going on over at McIntyre. So I'll turn it over to Ross.

Mr. Ross Colbert Boisvert stated good evening. Has everybody had a chance to review what was presented? I think everybody has a packet. Well, it has been almost exactly a year since we took over management of the ski area and we've gotten a lot accomplished in one year. The new building which you approved back last October started in June and is about 95% complete. We do have a grand opening scheduled for December and we will be sending out invitations for that, but along with the lodge, we've improved a lot of the drainage. We're in the process of installing a conveyor lift for the tubing area which is going to increase our uphill capacity from seven people at one time to about forty people at one time, so that's a huge improvement just by itself. We'll also be improving the amount of downhill lanes so there won't be stacking up at the top waiting to go down. We'll expand that from four lanes to eight lanes. There are a few other

items on there regarding the tubing area and we've also cut back some of the overgrowth underneath the chairlift so we can open up a trail underneath their which hasn't been open since I was a little kid skiing there. We'll have added ski terrain. We've also cut back a lot of the brush on the trails and some of the trails are even wider than they were before. We're in contract with a sign company here in Manchester to improve all of our area signage, directional signage. The main street sign will remain the same but coming into the area there will be improved directional signage around the lot and in the lodge area. We're going to try to keep everything one theme so it all looks the same. We've also improved the back parking lot, we started that last fall, pushing the brush back and trying to maximize the capacity of that lot to have as many cars in the back lot as possible. So those are the things that we've accomplished so far. We also put in our new ticket office, which was a huge improvement over what was there in the past.

Everybody who comes into the ski area now gets a tour of the lodge and sees all of the improvements we've made in just one year; they're very excited. So that's what's been accomplished. What we're looking to do in the future is continue the trail upgrades and expand some of the trails. We have discussed with Kevin, Amy and Peter the possibility of cutting a couple of little trails, nothing too major, because we don't want to take too many more trees out and take away the buffer zone that we have between the area and our neighbors. We have a couple of areas that we are planning to do that with. And the big plan that we have is zip lines in the summertime. This is an up and coming thing that a lot of ski areas are getting into for summer revenue. We had an engineer over there about a month and a half ago and we brought him up to a couple of spots where we plan to start and he said that this would be a spectacular zip line area. He just got done designing the one at Loon Mountain and he also did work up at Bretton Woods. So that is in the planning process and we are looking towards doing that for summer 2012. We continue to work towards recruitments throughout the area. I guess I've gone through what we've done and what we want to do. I guess there are some other items on the list, but I can answer any questions that you may have.

Alderman Shea stated thank you for the presentation. One of the more important aspects of any ski area is snow-making machinery. Have you designed some kind of help in that regard for your enterprise?

Mr. Boisvert responded the snow-making system was redone back when the City put in the tubing park. They redid the entire pump house, back 15 or 20 years ago. They redid the trunk line from the pump house all the way up through. We have state-of-the-art snow-making equipment, we have the big fan guns, and we're always going to look toward the future for improvement on that. Actually, this past weekend we were in ditches pulling up some leaks on some of the old snow-making pipe which we found and are replacing now. We also are working on a deal for a couple demo snow guns for this coming winter to try them out, kind of

the same technology but a different company, just to see if maybe they work better or more efficiently, but that's always ongoing.

Alderman Shea stated one other comment. I was up by Attitash and I noticed the people were lined up there. Is that what you envisioned for McIntyre in the summertime, maybe having slides or something?

Mr. Boisvert responded I don't think the slides would work well because of the distance of the hill; it's not quite long enough. I was up there at Attitash with my family this summer and their alpine slide has always been an attraction and they're installing a new one for next summer. But the zip line is basically a cable that you actually are suspended from and you go from Point A to Point B. We're looking for practice people once it's installed, so I know you are willing to try it.

Alderman Shea stated thank you.

Chairman Osborne stated I have just a quick question. On this new venture that you're taking on, this is a percentage of what kind of revenue that you didn't expect. What do you figure that percentage is going to increase, what you didn't expect of this new venture that you were just talking about that you're starting at other ski areas?

Mr. Boisvert stated the percentage of revenue?

Chairman Osborne stated yes. You weren't thinking of this when you first...

Mr. Boisvert interjected oh yes, it was included in the original proposal, yes.

On motion of Alderman Lopez, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to receive and file this item.

Chairman Osborne addressed item 4 of the agenda:

4. Communication from Planning and Community Development regarding a proposed purchase and sale agreement between owners of paper streets on Wellington Hill (the City of Manchester, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Manchester, and additional landowners) and a buyer for the parcel.
(Note: On 8/3/2010 this was referred to City staff for review; attached is a communication from Aldermen Ludwig and Corriveau regarding public meetings held in their wards.)

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Lopez, it was voted to discuss this item.

Alderman Shea stated may we hear from Pam Goucher?

Chairman Osborne stated the Committee would like to hear the report from Alderman Ludwig and Alderman Corriveau before we started questioning.

Alderman Lopez stated I think we should hear from staff first because there is a lot background information on this and then we can hear from the public hearing.

Chairman Osborne stated it's six of one; a half dozen of the other. Okay, let's do it that way.

Alderman Shea asked Pam, could you give your reports, the highlights or whatever?

Ms. Pam Goucher, Deputy Planning and Community Development Director, stated sure. As the chairman mentioned, this matter was referred to staff. When I say staff I mean they are representatives of the City Solicitor's Office, Highway Department, MEDO, our department, along with the two aldermen who have submitted a separate letter. We met on a couple of occasions and also attended the neighborhood meeting that was held at Hillside and we did a little research into the letters that have been submitted to this Board in the past several years. We also had the School Department representatives attend at least one of the staff meetings that we held and as I said in the report, the School Department did provide us with some enrollment numbers. We did not receive any communication from the School District stating that they had any desired plans to purchase the property, but I know that there has been a fair amount of discussion as to whether or not that's something that might be considered at some point in the future. I think that's part of what the discussion with Alderman Corriveau and Alderman Ludwig certainly involved, the potential for having that property in the land bank for some future school building. As far as I know from speaking with representatives of the Highway Department and Parks and Recreation Division, they have not indicated any specific desire to purchase that in advance for a park, although they certainly indicated that it's always nice to be able to have some park area, some neighborhood parks throughout the City. Unless you have any questions, that's generally I think...

Alderman Shea interjected the staff itself consisted of whom?

Ms. Goucher stated besides myself; Tom Arnold was in the discussions; representatives from the Highway Department were in the discussions; Leon LaFreniere was part of the meeting; Karen Burkush did attend a meeting for the School District, as did the two aldermen. I think that's it. And Jay Minkarah, I'm sorry.

Alderman Shea stated and according to your report here, on page 4-2, it said, and I don't want to read the last part, just part of it, 'The staff would recommend that the Committee determine the parcels to be surplus and disposed of in a manner consistent with the policies of the Mayor and the Aldermen.' Is that what your staff...

Ms. Goucher interjected that is correct.

Alderman Shea asked and it's still consistent with what you believe today?

Ms. Goucher stated that's correct. Before this letter was sent to the Clerk's office for inclusion in this agenda, all of the people that you see on this list received a copy of it and made a few comments prior to the letter coming to this Board, but there was a consensus among the staff that it would be appropriate to determine the land to be surplus.

Alderman Shea asked did the staff meet just one time? I know this is date October 12th. Did you meet prior to that?

Ms. Goucher responded yes. We didn't actually meet on October 12th. We met twice previous to that time and many of the staff also attended the neighborhood meeting on September 28th along with Alderman Ludwig and Alderman Corriveau.

Alderman Lopez asked the Master Plan that has been worked on for a long time, I think two years now, maybe three, I don't know, was there any discussion of that particular area up there as to what should be, or is it consistent with what they want to build today?

Ms. Goucher stated yes, it was zoned residential and there was not a discussion in particular on that parcel about changing that for other use.

Chairman Osborne stated before we hear from Mr. Ludwig and Mr. Corriveau, I would like to start off by expressing my views on this issue. I say this having knowledge of the Old Wellington Road area where my grandparents once owned 9.6 acres of property. Their property recently sold for approximately \$1.1 million.

Now we are faced with a land decision in the Wellington Road area of 39 acres, which is approximately four times the size of my grandparents' land, in the same area, with the selling price of only \$1.7 million. Both properties had the same problems as far as land usage on these acres. But with today's market, now is not a good time to sell property. My suggestion would be to land bank it. In the future, I foresee the value increasing. It would be an excellent investment over time. If the City were to put up 85 homes, that would produce an average of \$4,000 to \$5,000 in taxes per home; however, in the long run, it will cost the taxpayers more in services such as education, depending on the number of pupils, at about \$9,000 to \$10,000 per pupil, along with police, fire and highway services. This could run as high as three times the cost. You can't decrease taxes by increasing population unless jobs and businesses stabilize along with it, and even that is not a guarantee. If the City were to go bankrupt, the cause would not be from not accepting \$650,000 now, from our portion. The City needs some backup land for the future, for a school or otherwise. We should maintain what we have now. Rome wasn't built in a day. My opinion is to save what we have left and purchase this tract of land at approximately \$1.11 to \$1.12 million which was obtained on Old Wellington Road a few years ago, giving up 9.6 acres at \$1.1 million. I think it would be an equitable purchase based on the sale of the 9.6 acres. This can be done through a one time account which has a \$4 million surplus at present. What we need is a working city, not a sleeping city. We are putting the cart before the horse. Manchester is growing too quickly. We could have unintended negative consequences in the future. That's what I have to say.

Alderman Ludwig asked would it be possible to have Pam come back up? I have a couple of questions on the report. Pam, I'm going to page 4-2 also. These are easy questions, so you probably won't need it, but just so you know where I'm at. My recollection of this Parks and Recreation Master Plan is that it was done approximately six years ago. That is quite a bit of time, six years. I don't know how old the City Master Plan is; I didn't hear a lot of information. Anyway, in the Parks Master Plan, I think the language contained in it spoke more towards the fact that the City should be doing a better job maintaining its parks, as opposed to really referencing buying additional properties. I don't think that the Master Plan really ever spoke about the City expanding, necessarily, in a negative way, the Parks Department or facilities. So, I just read that paragraph a little differently than as it's stated in the report. I would honestly say that what the Master Plan really said was let's make sure we maintain the properties that we have, and one of the difficulties that we have in maintaining the properties that we have is there aren't a sufficient number of properties in Parks right now. Therefore, the ones that we do have are being beaten up, turf doesn't grow, and fields aren't being airfied and maintained as they probably should be. It hasn't gotten any better now. So that's all I'll say in reference to that paragraph. The next paragraph, where it speaks about the 39 acres of land, I've had conversations with former

Planning Director Bob McKenzie who wrote two articles, or letters, to the Board when he was an employee here, and both of those referenced pieces of property in 39 acres that weren't contiguous and therefore had little value to the City. In my opinion, as I read through those letters several times, the references made to disposal of those properties was more or less done because there was no real way to make this one contiguous parcel in their opinion back then. I think he spoke to the disposal of them really based upon the fact that those parcels would probably never be grouped together. Therefore, if they ever could be or whatever way they could dispose of them would probably be in the City's best interest. I don't disagree with that, in that form. However, that paragraph, in my opinion, does speak more to...I don't think his intent...I've had conversations with him over the last month, and I think if you talk to him today, in almost 2011, about his opinion as a non-City employee today, given the land opportunities up there, you may get a different opinion from the former Planning Director. I have a little bit of...it's very difficult for the Planning Staff to come in here and speak to what in their... it's easy for me to speak to this, but I think it's very difficult, having been a person on a City staff years ago. It's very difficult to come in here and speak your real mind. Now, Pam has put together an excellent report in terms of the facts she had to work with stated. That's what they were, a 2006 letter and a 1997 letter. Those are pretty old documents today based on the population growth. So Pam, I have no issue with the report that you gave or that the staff made. I think it's straightforward; I think it's succinct; I think that it says and gave the information that you have. I found it a little difficult to think that the City really had no official plan. If there's a Master Plan in place that talks about how the City should move forward with land opportunities, I'd like to see where it is, but there was nothing that we could find. As far as the School District goes, we've got documents up to 2009 for enrollment numbers. They were okay, but they said more in the newspaper, quite frankly, on Saturday, than they did in all the times we were meeting. All this talks about is redistricting and I'm all for fixing the problems with the districting if there are places that weren't brought to my attention that kids could be shifted to. So, if we had that information, maybe I would have a different opinion. But this information, on the front page of Saturday's paper, was not even made available to us. Enrollment was flat, we were told. I spoke to the fact that enrollment at Weston School was not flat. It has gone up a little, not a lot. They do have trailers, I could make a case for trailers, but the fact of the matter is, there is a lot of available land in northeast Manchester, both in Wards 2 and 6. Where the school goes someday, if there were ever to be a school, that's really not up to me, but I would ask the members of this Committee and anyone else in this room, who watches and does future City planning? Is it the Alderman's job in the ward? Is it the entire Board of Mayor and Aldermen? Who watches land opportunities that come and go? For years I searched for open space in south Manchester and we couldn't find it. Yes, we had our public hearing on September 28th and to the best of our ability we brought out about 30 people. I

think the paper said 24, and they're probably not too far off. It might have been 30. It doesn't matter. The majority of those people, old, young, educational-minded or not, even people that are older living up in a place called The Talons today, came to me and said not so much that they were against development of any kind of a piece of property, because I think they know that there probably is going to be development there. That's what open land is for. But they too, no one at that meeting, really, truthfully, said that in their opinion, the City should be building 85 more homes on this parcel. So I guess we can take another step and if we ever come to that, that's fine. Again, I addressed the City staff report, and I call your attention to an individual with whom I ate breakfast yesterday morning, my former boss, Clem Lemire, who turns 88 years old next month and still knows what's going on. If it weren't for him filling in wetlands when he shouldn't have and knocking down trees when he shouldn't have, and done all the kinds of things that he did that he shouldn't have, we wouldn't have kids playing in the places that we have today. So the fact of the matter is, he had a much better vision in my opinion, than a lot of us in this room or who are listening today. And if it wasn't for his vision, I don't know where people would be going and what they would be doing. And maybe he didn't make always the best friends in his position as the Parks Director, and I didn't either, but that's what you're supposed to do. You're supposed to advocate for what's best for the City, not for what's best at the immediate time to lower our tax rate, when we are in a very difficult budget situation, which we will be this year. We're supposed to have a vision, and that's what I'm going to continue to advocate for: a vision. And if at the end of the road, some day, the best thing to do in northeast Manchester is to build 85 homes, I'll be the first person to stand up and say this is the best thing to do. This gives us the most tax revenue; it doesn't impact our schools at all; we have plenty of room at Weston, Smyth Road, or McDonough, and we have none of those problems. I'll be the first person to stand up and say that. So I'll let it go with that and let others speak because I know that they may want to. That's where I went with this; it was never really about the selling price. Mr. Martel came forward in good faith. Mr. Reed from Blanchard and Stebbins came forward in good faith as we asked him to. The Diocese, Mr. Harrington came forward in good faith along with his representation, Attorney Callahan, so this is not about a back and forth between the City and them. This is about the fact that the City owns 39% of a piece of property, and does it really, really, really need \$650,000 roughly or should it take another look at maybe something else to do with the property? Based on what I read in Saturday's paper, this was perfect timing by the Union Leader in my opinion. They aren't even knowledgeable of what they have going. They may be drawing lines in the sand that shift people around to schools. I asked around this weekend...I didn't have much time...about where the open classrooms are? I'm sure someone has to have an answer to that. I'm told we can put art in a cart and music in a cart and we can free up classrooms, and you know if those places existed out there why was that information withheld so we didn't have to go

through this process in the first place? I was not privy to any of that information and if I was, this speech is probably moot. But it hasn't been, and no one's told me that yet, so with that being said I will yield to my colleague from Ward 6, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Alderman Corriveau stated regarding the report drafted by City staff on October 12th, I really don't take any issue with their statements. In fact, I may not agree with the conclusion they've drawn, but I think their summary of the facts is essentially correct, that the communication Alderman Ludwig and I received from the Wellington Hill Community Meeting, the consensus, well, maybe not consensus, but a significant amount of the dialogue that took place at that meeting was in regards to a lot of questions about this land, a lot of questions, some of which we were able to answer, some of which we were not. That being said, this Board, we're the policy makers in this City. It is ultimately our authority to determine what is and what is not surplus to City needs, whether a particular area of our City is underserved, whether through education opportunities or other sorts of public works. One point I would ask you to take note of is on page 4-2. The conclusion mentions 'absent any available funding to purchase these parcels and absent any requests from the School District that they would need these parcels.' I think those are important qualifiers because there is no conclusion yet on those two conditions. It is this Board's decision whether or not funding would be available should it be determined that a school is needed in that area. I think based on what Alderman Ludwig and I were told at the community meeting, there are certainly parents and families out there that feel their children are attending relatively overcrowded schools in this part of the City, in northeast Manchester, and their request of us was not that we build a new school. Their request was that we conduct a very thorough examination of this issue because, frankly, I think that this is one of the only areas in the City that's going to continue to grow. Alderman Osborne alluded to the fact that there's a lot of land up there and that area is going to continue to be developed. There are going to be more and more residents living in northeast Manchester, and with that there are going to be more students in those schools. Alderman Ludwig referred to the fact that the School District apparently, I was informed through the Union Leader, is going to undertake review of the need for redistricting. Now, in my opinion, this is a very important development that should impact this Board's decision in regards to this issue. I am not an expert on what a certain class size should be, on what schools are deemed overcrowded by accepted standards and what schools could be determined to take on more students. I really don't know if there are such schools, but I'll give the benefit of the doubt, perhaps there are. I know that Weston School would not be one of those schools. If your school has a trailer, in my opinion, you're out of space, and that school, Alderman Ludwig I believe said at the community meeting, the footprint is certainly too small to add on to that facility. So to conclude my remarks, I feel that this is still a gray area. In my opinion, because this is still a

gray area, because the School District is going to be undertaking this important review, because prior to the October 12th letter, our only other information on this property was a January 1997 letter from Bob McKenzie, Director of Planning, in which he said he didn't see an immediate City use for the property, that he was not aware of any particular need for a school. Then he cites the improving residential market of 1997 in asking that we consider acquiring title out there. Obviously we are in very, very different circumstances than we were in 1997. This is not a terribly good time to be in the real estate business as Alderman Osborne said in his letter, and as Director McKenzie said in 1997. I can't say for certain, I can't foresee whether or not there is an immediate City use for this property. I would agree that the Public Works Department expressed no need for any sort of park or facility out there, but in terms of the School District, we were provided some student enrollment numbers, but no opinion on whether they foresaw an immediate City need for a school serving that particular area. Now without that sort of recommendation, I for one am not willing to say that we should accept one-time money for an opportunity that we may rediscover in three, five, ten years, whatever it may be, the foreseeable future, that they City will indeed need that tract of land, so with that I'll thank my colleagues, and thank you.

Chairman Osborne stated I have just one comment on this. Everybody keeps talking about schools, schools, schools. I mean, basically, we have no green space out there. Even if we held onto this green space, whether it might be for green space or an investment in the future, it doesn't mean that the minute we purchase something we have to put a school on it. I mean, it'll be there to have anyway. So this is the whole picture of the whole issue here.

Ms. Goucher stated I just want to make a few comments. I don't want to confuse anyone. When Alderman Ludwig was referring to the Park's Master Plan, I didn't want there to be misinterpretation. What I wrote about was regarding the Master Plan that was adopted in December of 2009. I was talking about the comments relative to the overall City Master Plan; I was not speaking specifically to the Parks Master Plan, so I want to make sure that is clear. I'm not disputing that. And the only other comment I have...well two comments: the residential zoning that's there now, which was what was foreseen as being the zoning for the future in the Master Plan that was recently adopted, wouldn't preclude a school. A school can go on a variety of properties, thus it wouldn't be a special zone for a school. So the zoning when we're looking at the Master Plan of what's a vision for the future, leaving it as a residentially zoned parcel does not preclude there being a possibility of putting a school there. And that's just to go back to the comment about the vision as far as what we would zone it for, so it would allow that. And the only comment that I wanted to wrap up with is that while we suggested that it may be appropriate for the Board to determine that the parcel is surplus, we are not in any fashion commenting on policy. We said that if it was

determined to be surplus and to be disposed of in a manner consistent with your policies, whether that policy is to order the proposal and agreement that this Board has before it or some other manner in which you may undertake. That's what we were stating, certainly not to make that call for you as a Board.

Chairman Osborne stated I guess zoning laws are made to be changed too, right?

Alderman Roy stated yes, they are. We know that. Pam, you kind of already answered my first question. On page 4-2, where it says the City Master Plan, you are in fact talking about the Master Plan that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen looked at and then the Planning Board approved this year, in 2010, correct?

Ms. Goucher responded the Planning Board approved it in December of 2009, and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen endorsed it.

Alderman Roy stated and Leon, I'll ask you this next question. The School District, it says, 'absent any request from the School District'. I'm taking it the School District hasn't requested that we purchase any property that you know of for schools.

Mr. Leon LaFreniere, Director of Planning and Community Development, stated we have had no such requests.

Alderman Roy asked have they called you and gotten any information at all about construction projects that are going on in the City for residential, seeing that they're talking about possibly rezoning? And I ask that because I would guess that that's where they'd go for the information to try to predict the future if they look at the building permits or whatnot, or the plans that have been approved by the Planning Board.

Mr. LaFreniere stated they have not to my knowledge looked for any information directly related to building permits; however, they have been in contact with our office and we've provided them with some statistical information regarding population trends.

Alderman Roy stated okay. And that trending is... down?

Ms. Goucher stated well, overall it's not a huge increase. What you find, though, is that you get pockets in the City. You certainly get the pockets in the center city that are increasing and there are certainly the areas where there's been some newer development in the last ten years, but overall it's fairly flat.

Alderman Roy stated so it's consistent. That's very good. Thank you for that information. And hearing that information, I know that what Aldermen Ludwig and Corriveau are saying...and I appreciate their comments, it is certainly valid, but you have to remember, this still is not one contiguous piece of property if we were to try to purchase it. I don't know that we'd have the same good fortune that the individuals that have been working on this for four years have had with getting everybody to the table at once. Seeing that there's no immediate use, I personally don't want to spend any money this. Thank you.

Alderman Lopez stated I do remember comments in reference to a school when the School Department for about two years was looking for an administration building and building a school, and they even looked at Beech Street School. In reference to the acres, the nine plus acres up there, they looked at that particular area. I guess they concluded they couldn't find any location to put a school or administration building and today they're over on McGregor Street, which I know a lot of people work a lot on trying to find. If I recall correctly from conversation, we're not going to receive any more aid, and I know just in the letter that maybe in the future we'll get the aid. That's always a possibility. I don't particularly believe in land banking this for a number of reasons. This has been going on for a number of years, staff has been involved, Aldermen have been involved, the Mayor has been involved for the simple reason he was the Ward 2 Alderman at that time, and he can speak for himself, but I don't think he had any particular problem moving forward. The biggest thing is that I think we received this from because people didn't pay taxes. I think that's what you said one time before, is that correct, Tom?

Mr. Tom Arnold, Deputy City Solicitor, responded by and large, yes, that's correct.

Alderman Lopez stated so I guess one could say that all the people who own land over there, and we own 39 plus acres, if they want to just give us the land and not pay our taxes that would be great and we'd just hold onto it, but I don't think that's going to happen. So it is a tough decision. It's always a good vision, I can concur with Ron Ludwig. It is a vision that Parks always had, a vision down the road as to what we can do. I believe that this is one of those particular situations that's been going on and on and on and where do we get the money? I think that's the big thing. I don't think it's the \$650,000 that we're going to receive; I don't think it's the taxes, to a degree, that we're going to receive. I remember before I even became an Alderman they built McLaughlin School and they came to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and they said they needed money for operation and then they needed money for more teachers. They didn't even program the money in there. So what a school is going to cost...and you can listen to different people, and everybody's got a number...the number is between \$11 million and \$20

million dollars that a new school would cost, not counting the operation of it, not counting the teachers. I think this has been going on a long time, and everybody has done good work on it, including the Aldermen who held a public hearing and searched out the answers that they want to receive, but I can't see holding this stuff any longer than we have, other than to find out all the information, and as far as I'm concerned, all the information has been given. Thank you.

Chairman Osborne stated I have a question for the City Solicitor. When land is taken for back taxes, how much time does a person have to correct this back taxes? Is it a couple of years, two years?

Mr. Arnold stated it depends on when the property was taken, Alderman. There is a recent statute, probably three or four years old now, that requires an opportunity to repurchase. However, most of this land, if not all of it, was acquired by the City via tax deed before that statute became effective.

Chairman Osborne stated if land is 10, 15, 20, 25 years old, can a person come back and say that the City wants to buy it so they're going to make up their back taxes and then come up with another figure of what the land is worth? Can they come in after it? What's the deadline?

Mr. Arnold stated I believe with respect to all these parcels, that deadline has passed. It passed when the property was tax deeded.

Chairman Osborne asked so the City owns it?

Mr. Arnold state yes.

Chairman Osborne asked so we have, not 39 acres; we have about a third of that property out there that belongs to the City?

Mr. Arnold responded I believe that's correct.

Chairman Osborne stated the way I look at it is if we have to just hold onto a third of those acres. I'd be happy with that too. I think whoever is selling the land now would be more than happy to do the same thing with the City as they would with anybody else. Thank you.

Alderman Shea stated I have kind of a dilemma here. When Mr. Osborne and I reviewed the property that he referred to earlier, he and I thought, that it would be an ideal place for a senior center to be built, because it was in an area that was accessible and so forth. Then when I reviewed the property in question with Alderman Ludwig, that particular thought came back to me and it flashed back and

I said gee, maybe we didn't do the right thing. In my particular judgment, we did not do the right thing with the property that was owned by Mr. Osborne's grandfather and my concern here is, I'm wondering if we were to sell the property to the developer in good faith, whether or not we would, again, be doing the right thing, and that's the dilemma that I have in terms of making a judgment or decision on this particular property. I know the last time we did not do, in my judgment, the right thing; we put the senior center in the wrong place for the wrong reasons, in my opinion. Others differ with me, and that's fine. I don't want to make the same mistake and say we'll turn the property over to a developer and he's going to develop that property, when in essence I'm wondering if there could be other uses for that property, which we haven't even discussed, which we don't even know about right now. We've been focusing on schools and so forth but there may be other thoughts that we could generate over the course of time that would make a little bit more sense. So I leave you with my dilemma. Thank you.

Alderman Lopez stated I have a clarification, if I may. Alderman Shea, I think you realize this, but I'll just point out, it's not one piece of property.

Alderman Shea stated I realize what it is. In all due respect, I walked that particular area with Alderman Ludwig and he explained to me where the property was that is in question that the City owns and where in essence the City does not own. Maybe Alderman Ludwig wants to comment on that.

Alderman Ludwig stated yes I did take Alderman Shea to walk the property. He was nice enough to go and do that. But I believe we are selling 39 acres as one unit. That's the way it's been marketed as far as I can tell. Am I wrong, Mr. City Solicitor?

Mr. Arnold stated no, you're correct, it is being marketed as one parcel; however, as has been pointed out on many occasions, that one parcel consists of a number of parcels the City owns, a number of parcels that the Diocese of Manchester, on behalf of one of its parishes, owns, and several independent owners, so that the land the City actually owns is actually a checkerboard pattern. We don't own a contiguous parcel.

Alderman Ludwig asked so if the City were to consider buying it, we would have to enter into agreements with the various property owners, just as the realtor did to get to the point we're at now. Is that not correct?

Mr. Arnold stated if we wanted to attain ownership of the entire 39 acre parcel, then yes, we would need to purchase those pieces of property owned by other parties.

Alderman Ludwig stated and it appears to me that Mr. Reed and Blanchard and Stebbins Commercial Properties have done that work basically for us. Yes, I suppose there are owners out there, the Diocese could be one, who could say they don't really want to sell this to the City of Manchester. They could say that, and so could all of the private property owners. They could say they don't want to sell to the City of Manchester because they don't really like the City. So I guess that's true, but I think this idea that this is a checkerboard piece of property and it's not being sold as one is completely erroneous. It's not true! It's being sold as one 39-acre parcel that the City would have the opportunity to obtain as one 39-acre parcel, I believe. Now I could be wrong because I'm speaking for the Diocese and I'm speaking for the private sellers of these properties. Maybe there's one of them that really has an issue with the City and says no, I wouldn't be interested. That could happen, I suspect. But I don't like the smoke and mirrors that's being thrown about that it's still a checkerboard property. It's not. I want the people to understand. This is not. This is one contiguous property that the City could purchase for the difference between what it could gain and what it's being sold for. And for the life of me, I can't understand why we...I really didn't get into this because of the numbers in terms of what we're selling it for, but maybe we should. Maybe we should. Why does the City always sell its interest in properties on the low side, and buy on the high side? And I'll conclude with those remarks.

Alderman Roy stated I just want to respond to that. I hope the Alderman from Ward 2 didn't think I was trying to create a smoke and mirrors effect, but it is a checkerboard. We don't own it all; nobody owns it all; it's not contiguous. That's why I used that word, and I still believe that. I don't think it's erroneous, but I'm certainly not trying to create smoke and mirrors here. Thank you.

Chairman Osborne stated I think this is a good time for me to say something. I've been through a lot in the past few years. I'm not going to go all into it, but whether it's my grandparents' land or whatever it is, when it comes to the City as far as taking away from people privately-owned property for back taxes, even if they go over the two years, three years, four years, or whatever it is, when they have a piece of property say for a million dollars definitely and the City comes along and sells it ten years from then, whatever it is, I still feel deep in my heart, not just because of what I went through, but I think any family would feel this way, that I don't think the City has a right to do that. I think what's owed the City is what's owed the City. The back taxes, interest, whatever it might be, this is all that should be coming back to the City. If the land sells for a million dollars and they only owe \$500,000 on that land, that \$500,000 would be taken out of the million dollars, and the rest of it goes to the person's estate. I think that's the fairest way to live. I can't understand that one to this day, why the City does that. I'm sure every person out there wouldn't want this to happen to them, so I'm sure

they don't want to take everyone else's money for that purpose either. So I wanted to get that off my chest after all these years, and I did.

On motion of Alderman Lopez, duly seconded by Alderman Roy, it was voted to approve the sale of the land to the developer and send it to the full Board.

Chairman Osborne addressed item 5 of the agenda:

5. Communication from Alderman Lopez regarding honoring Manchester Veterans.

(Note: This is in response to a request by Alderman Corriveau that the Committee on Lands and Buildings look at naming City property in honor of our fallen soldiers from Manchester.)

On motion of Alderman Roy, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to discuss this item.

Alderman Lopez stated thank you Mr. Chairman. I've had discussions and communication with Alderman Corriveau. I also invited him when the Veterans Council has a meeting to come and talk to the veterans about this; they would like to have some input into it. I have provided all the members of the Board information. I only have about two to three books left of this of all the Veterans' squares and information on veterans, and I've also provided the latest information that we were working on with the CIP Committee of a monument and the standard granite marker that we put in front of squares for different individuals. So unless Alderman Corriveau would want to move in some other direction, I would like to have a meeting with the Veterans Council and invite him there so he can get their viewpoints on this.

Alderman Corriveau stated thank you Mr. Chairman. Yes, I would very much appreciate that, Alderman Lopez, and I'd also like to thank you for your work in providing this Board more information, because obviously this is a very important issue and it's a very important time where a lot of people are sacrificing for this country and a lot of people in this City are as well. So I think that as you and I meet and we meet with the Veterans Council and this starts going through CIP, I guess maybe the proper procedure, at least for the time being, would just be to table this request until you and I come forward with a more concrete set of policies.

On motion of Alderman Lopez, duly seconded by Alderman Shea, it was voted to table this item.

TABLED ITEMS

6. Communication on behalf of Berchmans and Lucille Vaillancourt regarding the purchase price of tax-deeded City property located at Riverdale Avenue, West Mitchell Street and Dunbar Streets.
(Tabled 08/03/2010)

This item remained on the table.

7. Report of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen advising that is has requested staff to prepare documents to provide that the City agree to extend the term on the 2nd mortgage relating to Lowell Terrace Associates property located at the northwest corner of Lowell and Chestnut Streets to coincide with the expiration of the existing first mortgage in 2013.
*(Note: The Committee has requested clarification from Finance as to whether financials from 1984 – 2001 have been provided; Solicitor to provide a fair market value for the property as established by the Superior Court in October; tabled 8/04/08; Committee requests the Solicitor to provide an updated Certificate of Insurance for the property; re-tabled 12/2/08; information to be provided by the Assessor; re-tabled 7/07/09 waiting for disposition letter; re-tabled 9/1/09, Finance Officer and City Solicitor to provide a final disposition letter; re-tabled 1/19/10; Mayor, Finance Officer and City Solicitor to provide a final disposition letter; re-tabled 6/21/2010)
On file for viewing with Office of the City Clerk, One City Hall Plaza.*

This item remained on the table.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Roy, duly seconded by Alderman Greazzo, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee