

## MAYOR'S BASEBALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**July 10, 1997**

**9:00 AM**

Chairman Keegan called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

**Present:** Chairman Keegan, Alderman Shea, Joan Bennett, Guild "Bushy" Hill, Sean Thomas

**Messrs.:** Mayor Wieczorek, Kevin Clougherty, Ron Ludwig, J. Schaufenbil

Chairman Keegan stated a lot has happened since we last met and I think we have a number of teams interested in coming to Manchester and I don't have question about the last team, Joe and Gerry the guy that runs his team down in New Briton. It seems that the main issue would be the requirement that this team and I've talked to a friend of mine down in Maryland who's organization would also like to come, John Danais the General Manager down there, but they expect that the City and the State or certainly the area that they want to put their team into should provide the facility for their team and the requirements are a lot more than when the Yankees were here 23 years ago, a new stadium would cost somewhere around \$10 million and then the question is, which we don't know the answer to at this time, what would it cost to expand Gill Stadium to meet the qualifications that are required for a minor league time. The other issue on the table is would we consider an independent team or do we feel that a minor league team would be the only team that we would accept for Manchester, I think the interesting part is that all of the people I have talked to in every case, the State has supported the stadium along with New Briton, the State of Connecticut put up \$6 million and New Briton put up \$4 million and down in Maryland this other owner who has three different sites and in each case it has been a joint effort between the State and the City.

Alderman Shea asked where did the State get the \$6 million.

Mayor Wiezorek replied they've got this reservation there, Bill, they call Foxwood.

Alderman Shea stated the State used money they got from race tracks and things like that.

Chairman Keegan stated I don't know if they designated it, Bill, I would say that every other State in the United States has a more stable source of income than we do from the standpoint of sales taxes and things like that.

Mayor Wieczorek stated they get about \$100 million a year from Foxwood, I guess that is their minimum guarantee, if I remember correctly and now they have another casino there Mohegan Sun which is within ten miles from that.

Chairman Keegan stated Maryland was another organization that was interested in...I don't believe that Maryland is a special source of income like, for example, sweepstakes, it's in the general fund.

Mr. Clougherty stated I think in Maryland they have a separate authority that is responsible for raising money for all of their things and they raise it through the lottery, I think Maryland is one of those that has a lottery that one game a year the proceeds go into this sports venue authority and they use that as a source for colleges and all of the other things that they have down there. I think Camden Yard and some of those others are financed that way and they usually provide bonding, they don't give you a chunk of money out front and they try to match the life of the facility to the flow of the funds and they do that through debt service payments.

Alderman Shea stated I noticed that in Nashua they are getting Bud Harrelson and a group of people back for an independent league down there, there's no stipulation between a franchise within a 50 mile radius if it's independent, but there is if it were a double A or affiliated with a major league ball club, is that correct.

Mayor Wieczorek stated the independent league, I think are better from a rivalry standpoint.

Alderman Shea stated probably, I guess. These particular teams are coming from different parts such as New Jersey.

Mr. Thomas stated that's a league-owned team.

Alderman Shea stated there will be a little competition between Lowell and Nashua because Lowell is getting in a major league franchise, I believe, down there and this particular league the franchise included Atlantic City, New Jersey, Bridgeport, Connecticut, LeHigh Valley, Pennsylvania, Newark, New Jersey and someone said County, New Jersey. But, the other independent league out of Lynn

and the Spinners which is a Boston Red Sox affiliate in the Class A New York/Pennsylvania league is the franchise that is opening up in Lowell. And, I don't know Tom Rath up in Concord is enticing a group to come in and I don't know if that's an independent league or double A, do you know, Sean.

Mr. Thomas replied he is trying to get an A team affiliated with the Penn League, the New York/Penn League. He's trying to obtain the current franchise and move it to New Hampshire. He doesn't have a stadium yet, that is going to be his biggest problem.

Mayor Wiczorek stated, Howard, with all of the folks you have spoken to is everybody whether it's an independent league or an organized single A, double A, triple A, do they all want a stadium, do they want to have a stadium provided to them by whoever, whether it's the state, city or a combination.

Chairman Keegan replied the double A, the requirements are such that they've got to have a stadium that is quality because they pay \$4.5 million just to join and that's a lot of money and they have to have a stadium that has got to be supported by the power structure in the committee, in other words you're buying like a box down at the Red Sox and they're going to have to sell those types of things like lounges and everything else. Now, as far as the independent go, I thought we had a pretty good deal with Mark Spirandio, he's an accountant and a general manager for another team and when he came in he had plenty of money. When he went in, Ray, the minimum amount of stuff that had to be done looked like it was \$750,000, most of which was going to be for the proper seating and that's not counting the concessions and everything else and when he felt that it was going to be double over a million dollars, he got the impression that the City wasn't not was he prepared to put up a million plus to make Gill Stadium adequate. His need was roughly what we've got there - 3,000 seats.

Mayor Wiczorek asked what do the others require.

Chairman Keegan replied 6,000 seats...a lot of fancy seats with boxes and cushions, etc. and much, much larger concession. The one we have now is very, very minimum. We don't have enough bathrooms for the women, it needs some major...so, that was really the two. We had a double A and an independent and I was financially comfortable with one.

Mayor Wieczorek stated I don't know if since the Yankees were here where they had box seats, season boxes that were right over the dugout because I had season tickets to that, did they take those out.

Mr. Ludwig replied no.

Alderman Shea stated the independent league you made reference to, they put up just the amount of money necessary to have a team, is that correct and they furnish all of the equipment and things but they rely on the community to provide them with the upgraded stadiums as well as do they control the concession stand and things of that nature.

Mr. Thomas replied that is what they were looking for. We dealt with two teams in the independent league that kind of made some serious offers. Spirandio was a little bit more in depth than what he was willing to do. He was prepared to put in a two to three hundred thousand dollars investment into the seats and he would look to us for help with the concession areas and the bathrooms and a few things like that, but he was pretty satisfied with the park as is other than those areas.

Alderman Shea asked what then in return does the City get by supplying the money up front for these teams to come in, in other words what does it mean to the City economically or what does it mean as far as whatever we would like the stimulation of business or interest of folks, in other words why are we encouraging these people to come, what does it mean on our end.

Mr. Thomas replied quite frankly, I think that is something that we don't know, that is something I think we've probably gone a little further ahead than we really should have at this point. I think we really need to see...put together a study to figure out if you bring a team in are you going to bring in "X" amount of fans a year, what's the reliability and what are they going to do. Are these people going to be coming in from out-of-town shopping here, are they going to add something to the economy and that is something we don't know.

Mayor Wieczorek stated then tell me. Maybe, Kevin, you know. With the race track up here in Loudon, I hear them talking about the economic benefit of that,

that every dollar that is spent it turned like seven times, is that kind of a rule of thumb or is that...

Mr. Clougherty replied, no. Different industries are multipliers and you have to go out and they're not universally...where you come in and say if I put it in this neighborhood and that neighborhood you have to really go in and do your own study, but there are some baseline, data bases that you can go in and use and I think that is what Sean and I talked about is exactly the same question.

Alderman Shea stated one of the other points too is the impact on the neighborhood in terms of if you bring a franchise in, of course, one leads to another and, therefore, where people may complain now because of graduation, parking and so forth.

Mr. Thomas stated that is something they are going to have to face 40 times a year with just an independent league type.

Alderman Shea stated plus the impact it would have as we discussed on local teams here such as the legion teams, the high school programs and things of that nature.

Chairman Keegan stated the bottom line, Bill, from the double A they would pay us \$75,000 a year and half of the profits from the concessions. Now, that was their bottom line offer, now whether we could have got more, I don't know. Either way it was a long way from supporting a large portion of the bond depending on the amount of money coming in from \$650,000 to \$750,000.

Mr. Thomas stated if I remember correctly, Mr. Spirandio stated once everything was done he was going to pay a certain amount of rent and I think he was saying he would give a percentage of the concessions, it was probably more than 10% because that is where the independent league teams make it or break it is on the concessions.

Chairman Keegan stated I don't know much about baseball but the baseball people are here. Do you think we should be very interested in the independent league.

Mr. Thomas stated I want to throw in one thing right now, I promised the members of the Committee I would have any answers back to the RFQ before today's meeting. The reason why you don't have anything back is because we got no answers to our RFQ which was due last night at 4:00 PM. We got several calls and sent out the package of information to them, but nothing has come in.

Ms. Bennett asked did any of them ask you if our deadline was hard.

Mr. Thomas replied I asked everyone and the two to three people I dealt with probably were not qualified, but the third person who had quite a bit of experience behind them, at least that is how that person portrayed himself, felt that he would be able to put together a package like that because in the end it really wasn't an in depth of a request and certainly the other things was you're always eligible to ask for an extension and they certainly could have put that before this committee.

Chairman Keegan stated I get the impression that they were more interested in is the City and state seriously willing to put up the adequate amount of money for a renovation of the stadium or a new one, you're talking about eight or ten million dollars and they didn't want to fool around and show their qualifications and filling out a long of forms if they felt that we were really not seriously looking at it.

Mr. Thomas stated I had the sense that they were kind of insulted that we would have put out an RFQ to them.

Chairman Keegan replied Joe was. But if he's this multi-millionaire like he says he says, I can understand that.

Mr. Clougherty stated the problem I have with...it's not really a problem, I think these people that were at this meeting and who want to do something, we can't operate within the time deadlines that they want us, it seems as though they need to make a decision about their team within two months and they want to know if the City within two months can commit to this expansive improvement to Gill Stadium. The City just can't even if it wanted to and thought it was wonderful could not turn around and do the necessary due diligence required for a project of that scale in two months. So, that particular issue may not be able to be accomplished. Now, in terms of the broader question do you want to continue to take a look at baseball for Gill Stadium, if you want to do that then there are some things that you will have to do up front to spend some money in order to be able to answer some of the questions. One, what is the likely attendance at these programs. Two, what is the cost of bringing Gill Stadium into compliance with

the standards for a double A facility. If it's ten million dollars that you are going to be looking for to improve Gill Stadium then you're looking at something about \$700,000 a year in debt service. I know that's a big number, but it's not out of the question. If, for example, as a result of your feasibility study show that you are going to attract 300,000 people year to Gill Stadium for those programs then you can add on a dollars worth of surcharge and you're halfway home and then you start to take a look at other sources of money like rent if they are going to pay seventy to a hundred thousand dollars, well that gets tacked on there and then if you're going to be looking at half of the revenue then once you know what your projections are for the number of people coming you may generate the average, how much soda does the average attendee use, are you going to allow liquor and how much is that going to generate and once you have the answers to those questions you may find that there are sufficient revenue streams on a pro forma basis to justify making some improvement to Gill Stadium. But, there are a lot of unanswered questions that require a lot of detailed analysis in order to get to that point and you can't do that in a two month window. So, I guess my response to you is that I thought the people were very impressive, I thought they were very sincere, unfortunately, I thought the timing constraints of their proposal was upsetting. And, I don't think we can just turn around and meet those and operate and do everything we have to do in the time constraints.

Mayor Wieczorek asked how much time do you need.

Mr. Clougherty replied you would need about a year. What stretches us out is that you have to go through an RFP process and you're going to have to hire consultants. You want to make sure that you're going to hire somebody that's knowledgeable about stadiums and that can come in and take a look at Gill as it is and say alright and knows what the standards are and can give you a range. Maybe, it's conceivable that you could grow into...what's the minimum requirement we need for the first year for debt service and maybe put in a plan to...overtime...to bring the stadium in compliance. Maybe, that would be acceptable. But, those are all points of negotiation in a project like that that you can look at and if you want to answer those questions, I think you have to go to the Aldermen and say okay, do we want to pursue this, are we willing to allocate or appropriate some money for a study and if we do the study we can then get some results back. But, you really have to look at the architectural and the operational feasibility - what's the interest in baseball. Parking would be part of the architect's review for bringing the stadium into compliance with the standards.

Alderman Shea asked, Ron, if a study were initiated it would tend to have a positive outcome as far as your department would be concerned, wouldn't it, in terms of...do you at present have enough information about potentiality of Gill of

what it may need, could a feasibility study be beneficial for you and your department, would it be a waste of money or time.

Mr. Ludwig replied we've done a small one already. I guess it hasn't addressed everything, it hasn't addressed all of the needs and that's when the question came from the Board of Aldermen it also said to address alternative sites within the City. Some of the answers, I guess, and it wasn't a very detailed, in some cases feasibility study that we did because it really didn't address attracting a double A ball club here. So, that being said, I think you're talking about a lot more people coming to watch double A ball possibly because of the caliber of play; that's more people, that's more parking. Kevin makes a figure of three hundred thousand people coming here and that's 7,500 hundred people at 40 games, that's a lot. I would seriously doubt that you would put 7,500 people in the stands. So, is it a hundred and twenty thousand which is about 3,000 at a game, is that more realistic.

Mr. Clougherty stated that is exactly what you need to look into.

Alderman Shea stated by doing a study which would be comprehensive that would give us control over certain aspects of any kind of situation that may develop. In other words, it's not like someone coming to us and saying we would like you to do this, that and the other thing. We, as a community, would be in a position to say to them after this study here is what we have, okay. Now, can you do something in terms of upgrading and doing things like that.

Mr. Ludwig stated I think we have that. I think it's very important what Kevin says is important.

Alderman Shea stated then maybe allocating money for a study wouldn't be necessary.

Mr. Ludwig stated if you want to go forward and have somebody that is going to go out and do a market analysis for you and all those kinds of things of real substance.

Mr. Clougherty stated you are not going to be able to go out and issue debt which is really the way you would want to finance this without having some type of a feasibility study done and it's just a question of what level you want to proceed. A lot of what happens is if you make the improvements to the venue, the stadium that draws as much people in initially in the first couple of years as a team. People are curious and they are going to come and look at them. If they go that first time and they like the stadium and they have a good time, then they'll go back and kind

of feed off of each other. Bringing in a quality baseball team to an old stadium doesn't always work either. But, those are the things that you have to make sure that you've got an independent dispassionate consultant looking at that and he's going to give you hard numbers and says this either works or it doesn't. You're going to save money in the long run because if he comes back and says you may think you have a market here, but what we've found is that you don't have the support out there to do a double A then there is not a lot of reason to go out there and do the capital improvements to a double A level but he may come back and say but you could support some kind of an independent league and then that might be a different level of capital improvement that you could do to the stadium in terms of some upgrading of the facilities and stuff like that, but you've got to know what your audience is.

Mayor Wieczorek stated I agree with you, what would we be doing regardless of who comes here...nothing or something...

Mr. Clougherty stated that is exactly right because if you're sitting across the table from a team and you're trying to negotiate, but they're going to say we don't know how many people are going to come so there is some uncertainty here, so we want to keep it at five or we want a bigger share of the revenues to take care of offsetting our risks that we are taking here. If you are equipped with a feasibility study by a recognized firm then that gives you leverage at the negotiations table to get longer leases from teams or to get it better insured, the revenues or something like that, but that's their starting point and without that, it would be hard for us to say that we should be going out and making improvements to a facility without some type of a more detailed analysis.

Alderman Shea stated my understanding is that most baseball franchises that are making money in communities don't have to move, the ones that tend to relocate are the ones that are either losing money or their anticipation is that they are going to lose money, so it's kind of like without a fly by night deal where they come here and if it's beneficial and profitable for them to stay they will, but if it isn't then they'll begin looking for some other areas to approach.

Mr. Clougherty stated I think people are courting Manchester because on the surface we seem like a great place with a nice facility, but I don't think that because people are courting us that necessarily means that we are excused from doing our own due diligence and making our own decisions about what costs and fiscal impacts would be. So, I think I shared that with Howard after our meeting and it doesn't mean that you couldn't do this and it doesn't mean that it wouldn't be feasible, but we might get this report back saying this really could work if you do this and that and if you could get certain revenue streams in place, it might turn

out to be something that you could do, but until you take those prudent steps you're really guesstimating and that is not what we would recommend that you do.

Chairman Keegan stated let's assume that the cost isn't quite as much as \$10 million and the bond issue is for let's say 20 years...\$600,000 a year. At what point do you have to generate revenue from this facility in order to make it reasonable for the City to pick up the difference. I'm concerned that it's a 20-year bond and how many 20-year terms do you have. I'm a banker Ray, I can't help it.

Mr. Clougherty replied that's a good question, the answer is how many of these teams will come in are willing to share with the local teams. If we're going to put that amount of money into those facilities and some of these teams, at least what Mr. Spirandio said was that we would be willing to work our schedule around your legion teams and what not and if that's doable then fine, then there's a broader benefit to the community of making the improvements to the stadium because our local kids are going to get a chance to attract better tournaments, etc. But, again, that's part of the work and that is where you have to have the feasibility study because that is part of that revenue too because if you are going to have more tournaments and other things outside of just the professionals going in there that is part of the revenue stream that goes towards the debt service and that is what a feasibility is going to look at and not just the impact of the baseball and you have to balance those things and that is what is really comes down to is a balancing act. What you really need is somebody who has done a lot of these studies and are familiar with the league and has the appropriate software and canvassing capabilities to do a good study for it and without that you're really just raising questions.

Mayor Wieczorek stated part of it is a business investment and the other part of it, of course, is you periodically have to invest money in your facilities that you have to keep them up and I don't know just what that mix is.

Mr. Clougherty stated I would think that one of the things we would recommend as part of any capital plan for the improvements would not just be the upfront money, but also putting aside some type of a capital reserve to ensure that the facility was maintained and that would have to be factored into any financing plan for improvements. When you're going to make that level of improvements you don't want to just go and walk away from it.

Mayor Wieczorek stated no because you've seen what we've done with the garages.

Mr. Clougherty stated you want to do that feasibility study and you want to get some preliminary architectural study information as to what compliance would cost, can you phase it in. So, you'd have to spend some money to get answers to that, but then you can decide how you want to proceed and at what scale you want to proceed and what types of improvements do you want to make to attract legion tournaments, etc.

Mayor Wieczorek asked what is the answer to these teams that all come here or the leagues that come in here, they obviously don't just drive by and say gee this looks like a nice place. They must have done some sort of a study to determine that this market is a viable market.

Chairman Keegan stated before they're going to put up the \$4.5 million they are going to do a big study just like Mark did a preliminary study for an independent league. I really feel they're coming here and asking do you really want us here, are you willing to put up an adequate stadium for us or renovate the one you've got to meet the standards for the double A teams. If we said yes we're ready to go we'd be seeing a lot more, but the period of time they're talking about...weeks...they're talking weeks, so we're talking weeks with them and that's the important thing. They want to make a decision within the next two or three months.

Mr. Clougherty stated presumably they did a feasibility study of where they are now. It's getting a quality team with a long-term commitment and in order to do that you may ask them and I don't think it would be out-of-the-question to ask them to share with you any feasibility studies that they have already done, but I still feel that the City would be prudent to do its own analysis and not be relying on somebody else because there are so many of these transient teams that are shopping from city-to-city that the credibility of the feasibility study that they're doing might be open to question. So, I think if the City wants to invest the type of money that you're talking about, I think it's a community thing that could happen over time but you have to go about it in a disciplined fashion and hire some professionals to help you make the decision.

Mayor Wieczorek stated I think that's true. Like I said, you don't know if they just did a drive by and said it looks like a nice place and they don't have a facility, so this would be a great place to put it or whether they have some hard data that supports what they're saying. Maybe, they're just throwing it up against the wall and hoping that something sticks somewhere.

Alderman Shea stated I think you hit the point is that when somebody invests in a team...a million point five...they're not investing in a community, they're investing

in a team and now they want somebody else to come aboard for their investment, but they're putting up \$1.5 million, but they're asking you to put up \$10 million or whatever, in our case, for them to come here and we're going to dictate some of the terms like we want the concessions, we want to put in prices for different things and we're saying that everything they're doing is subtracting from what the benefits community-wise as far as financially-wise, so by the time the bottom line comes we're probably paying them money to come here and losing on the deal because we can't sustain the amount of attendance and then they decide after a year or two that it isn't viable for them, they've gotten what they want and so they move again to some other place and change the name of the franchise and the next day the owners change, etc.

Mr. Clougherty stated maybe the bottom line is that the City does have to pay, but then it's worth it when you take a look at the broad economic outlook and what percentage of people in those stands are from out-of-town, where are those dollars coming from. But, again, until you've had somebody take a look at that and do some thoughtful analysis on that you're just guessing.

Chairman Keegan stated I'm not sure that the people in this town are willing to pay the prices as in some of the more affluent communities.

Ms. Bennett stated there's an article in this month's *Money* magazine that features Manchester's number six position about not only baseball and different places and different teams around the country.

Mayor Wieczorek asked what in essence are they saying.

Ms. Bennett stated I think the average ticket price was four or six dollars.

Mayor Wieczorek stated at four to six dollars a ticket with a \$10 million investment isn't going to work and I don't have to be a banker to figure that out. We've seen that in Portland. If you're up there with the family and you take your kids there's no time to go to the mens room because there's something going on between periods.

Ms. Bennett stated it's the same price as going to a movie, but it might cost you more because you have to buy hamburgers and hot dogs and all the other things.

Mr. Clougherty stated the other thing is advertising. If you're going to have this there are those that are going to advertise on the walls and other places, so part of the feasibility study is not only looking at what the citizens are interested in, but advertising and television rights and all of those things. It takes time and it's not

that it can't be done and I'm not saying that when you finish the report it doesn't come back and say you've got a great community and it could work, but you really have to go through some...

Mayor Wieczorek stated there is not even a question in my mind as to what would be better and there's not question that organized ball is better than an independent league. Whether the community could support organized ball.

Mr. Clougherty stated those are different levels. Whether television is going to commit to doing certain games of an independent league versus double A and if they do you're going to have a certain lighting. Now, are you willing to make investment in the lighting for this level or what.

Mr. Ludwig stated if people were to drive up 93 and look for baseball stadiums, we have one. They're not going to stop in Concord because they don't have one. I think they try to figure out what the community support will be, what the market is and I'm not sure if they have different studies in their pockets that they take out and use for different places. But, quite honestly, for us to go forward without our own study would be ludicrous.

Alderman Shea stated when a study is done a study could be done not so much before that league becomes operative but after it has been in operation for a while to see the impact of what is going on in Nashua.

Mr. Clougherty stated I think that is part of the barometer, you want to look at that, you want to look at Portland, you want to look at comparable sized areas.

Alderman Shea stated when you talk about driving up from Wilmington and other places in Massachusetts the first place they'll probably stop will be Lowell to watch a game there and if they are not satisfied they'll hit Nashua. But, chances are they'd go to Boston before they'd go to Manchester, so your draw would have to be kind of north of Nashua and again depending on what happens here.

Mr. Clougherty stated it's different things. As you get into it and look at it are you going to get a team that's got a parent. Some of the parents are good, solid investments and there's an organization behind them and they're going to provide some support to the team and they have some name recognition and that's important and those are things that you have to trade off and have somebody tell you what are your range of options. Right now, it doesn't seem to me you have a good handle on it, we know what our options are, but we don't know the feasibility of the different options and what the costs associated with those

different options are and you need to quantify that to a point where you're comfortable moving forward.

Mayor Wieczorek stated my feeling is if this is a good market then this is a good market and it will be a good market this year and next year and the year after and if it isn't then this year, next year, or the year after is not going to make a difference.

Mr. Clougherty stated, Sean, it seems to me that if you send out an RFP that says we've had a feasibility study done by...and you've got a nationally-recognized firm doing this then the level of interest in that RFP and you can say we've done the feasibility and it's got this, this, and this then I think you're going to see some responses. But, a lot of your established teams or your franchises that are going with expansion clubs are just not going to take a risk and I think if you're in a strong position you can lay something out.

Mayor Wieczorek stated you need to know the level of interest.

Chairman Keegan stated you have to have a knowledgeable interest of the Aldermen to put up a reasonable amount.

Mayor Wieczorek interjected they are not going to put up any money until...

Mr. Clougherty excused himself as he had another meeting to attend.

Mr. Schaufenbil asked, Kevin, before you leave, how much are we talking about for a feasibility study that would take about a year.

Mr. Clougherty replied about \$55,000, I think it would be somewhere in that ballpark.

Mr. Hill stated what we've been saying here is if we are going to spend money to fix stadiums that we're looking for some long-term commitments. I don't see us getting any kind of long-term commitment from any independent league. So, you could spend less money to bring independent's in with no commitment. If we're going to go to a double A franchise and spend a lot of money our chances of getting a commitment from them is probably greater, but I disagree with anybody that says that any kind of a minor league team coming in here can be compatible with three legion teams and Babe Ruth using Gill Stadium never mind high schools; that doesn't work because right now you've got from the state of the legion season to the end of the legion season each of the three posts, two of them get 11 dates and one of them gets 10 dates and you've got five or six dates for

Babe Ruth for this tournament and that is their season and it's over, they play everyday there. The minor league team is not going to book itself out-of-town for 43 days.

Mr. Ludwig stated in the little feasibility study we had done by Ben Gary which is all we asked them to do for a very small amount of money, I think what we didn't want to say and I directed him not to say is I want the report to say that this is impossible. Was there going to be some displacement of legion ball clubs, yeah, but could it still be done, yes. You could still do it, you could bring a 45 game schedule in but you're going to have displacement and I think that is what you're saying. One of the things I found out as strange in Nashua and I don't know maybe I can't remember, I had to read it in *The Union Leader*, I don't buy *The Nashua Telegraph*. The team that I think I read was coming to Nashua was of the Atlantic League and the name I remember reading was Frank Bolton of the Atlantic League. Now, Frank Bolton was here two months ago, he called me on a Wednesday and showed up.

Mr. Thomas stated that was almost eight months ago.

Mr. Ludwig stated so he called and said I'll be there tomorrow, meet me at the ballpark, I'm going to get a plane ticket, I'm on the 101 floor of the World Trade Center and I'll be there tomorrow. Now, I meet him at Gill Stadium with a camcorder and he's a nice guy, but he's the only person who ever showed up to Gill and said this wouldn't suit our needs and he also said that basically he had heard about our interest in maybe obtaining minor league teams on the independent leagues through the inquiries of the North Atlantic League. So, he was kind of on the skirt tails of saying well, those guys are interested in them, so we had better go and see what they have at Gill Stadium. But, he's really only looking for a place until the place in Atlantic City, a new ballpark is ready. So, he said we were just looking for a year or so. If you notice they're charging them the same amount per game in Nashua which the Director of Parks in Nashua told me by phone conversation that that is what we charged the team last year knowing full well that they would go out of business.

Mayor Wiczorek stated I always found that if a person doesn't intend to pay, doesn't care what you charge. So, the \$750 times 40 is which \$30,000 a game or whatever, I don't think that Nashua intends to collect any of that. But, I think what Nashua has different from Manchester is they have a facility, it's pretty nice and maybe it's nicer than Gill.

Mr. Hill stated they gave them chairs/seating.

Mr. Ludwig stated when we put some money into Gill in '97 we had about \$5,000 to spend which went quickly on the roofing, electricity and it also took it to the level that we wanted to. We weren't looking for carpeting, TV monitors, etc. because we weren't playing to that venue. Gill is still a solid building now, the seats were discussed in 1987 and by virtue of a lot of dialogue the decision was made to leave them because they really fit with the way of the architect's recommendation. Now, Bolton came with a catalogue with seats that were really beautiful. They were new but they had an old look to them, but that was probably a million dollars worth of seats.

Alderman Shea read "The seats here on the outside to the dealers at the ALPP will permanently install 2,500 armchair seats at Holman Stadium which the league purchased from the closed Atlantic Fulton County Stadium. The \$50,000 price tag for the seats will be picked up by the league and if the league leaves the City after the one-year contract is up the seats will remain." Notice where the franchise are, there's none around here. Like I said the franchise are in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Bridgeport, Connecticut, LeHigh Valley, Pennsylvania, Newark, New Jersey, and Somerset County, New Jersey.

Mr. Hill stated we all love Gill Stadium, I grew up in the City and yes it does need some modernization, but the feasibility study if we go ahead and spend this money and the study says the concession is not adequate, the bathrooms are not adequate, the seats are not adequate, the ticket box is not adequate, what's left.

Alderman Shea stated I don't think citizens of Manchester would mind if renovations were made and the beneficiaries were primarily the taxpayers, I don't think the people would mind doing that. As the Mayor had indicated before the people want to see something for their quality of life as well and I think if that were done as Kevin had mentioned.

Mr. Hill stated in the best case scenario and I would like to see a successful double A franchise in Manchester, but I have a funny feeling that in the best case scenario and you do upgrade and we do spend \$10 million and I don't know where that would come from as we had been talking about five or six million for a while that if you do fix that facility up and it is successful, I have a real concern about parking in that area.

Mr. Ludwig stated I guess we're going to have to see how the new stadium is going to impact Gill, is the Thanksgiving Day game going to be played at the new stadium versus Gill. I'm going forward with business as usual. I think West will be able to play some of their games over there in a nice facility, do they want to play all of them there I'm not sure, but it gives it a sense of homeness.

Mr. Hill stated then we have the "what are we going to do with Gill Stadium". If you have two stadiums that is going to add people to your staff when you have to maintain two places.

Mr. Ludwig stated if a new complex was built, what are we going to do with it. All I'm losing is September and October, that's two months out of twelve that Gill exists for. Gill to me exists more for what it does from April until the middle of August than it does really from the middle of August for football and soccer to the beginning of November.

Mr. Hill stated what I'm saying, Ron, is if the new facility is built to play football and soccer and the rest of these sports on the riverside and West is going to play football at their place what is going to be left to play at Gill Stadium other than youth baseball, maybe not even soccer.

Mr. Ludwig replied let me tell you this about the 90 events schedule that we entertain at Gill, right now. It is not going to take too long for the people on the riverfront to figure out that if they took the venue, baseball doesn't do a lot of damage to Gill Stadium to the turf. But, when we pick up in the middle of August for football and soccer in rain and snow and every kind of weather it isn't going to take this facility too long to figure out how difficult it is to maintain turf. It will take them a very short period of time, I can guarantee it. The first time they say plow the field with four inches of snow and it's not frozen they're going to find out what they're turf looks like because you can't stop the Thanksgiving Day game and you can't stop the championship game in November with four inches of snow, you plow the field or shovel it, do something and that's not...ask George Toma, he knows...that's not the best conditions for grass. So, what they think they're going to be able to maintain with a seventy, eighty, or ninety game venue on one rectangular field which is what they have is a far cry from what they're going to end up with and I caution you to that. So, I think there could be dual usage and I think they'd be very willing at some point down the road to say we don't really care to have football played here if we thought we could generate enough revenue from soccer and I thought that all along. They wouldn't have a football game down there, I don't believe, if they didn't need to generate dollars from it.

Chairman Keegan asked are we pretty much ready to conclude this Committee.

Mayor Wieczorek interjected it sounds to me as though a conclusion has been drawn.

Ms. Bennett asked what happens now though, what's the procedure to undertake a feasibility study.

Mayor Wieczorek replied I think what we ought to do is take into consideration a feasibility study and go from there as there are various aspects that we have to try and reconcile.

Alderman Shea stated the timing of the feasibility study is critical. In other words, if we were to suggest a feasibility study to some Committee, say the CIP Committee and say that they should discuss it then basically that feasibility study like I explained before should be conducted within a time frame that makes sense for us, so we would have to decide and we could recommend that a feasibility study be conducted, but not put a time preference as far as we are concerned.

Mr. Thomas interjected right, it's up to the Aldermen at that point.

Alderman Shea stated if I'm reelected and appointed to that Committee maybe I could have more input into that.

Alderman Shea moved to request that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen initiate a feasibility study to explore the possibilities of locating an affiliated baseball franchise in the City of Manchester. Mr. Thomas duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Mr. Thomas stated we, therefore, would ask that once the decision had been made to proceed with a feasibility study that this Committee would have the input to help draft such RFP.

Mayor Wieczorek stated you need input from this Committee as well as Parks, Finance and others who usually get together and help draft RFP's.

Mayor Wieczorek stated I appreciate the time that you put into it and I think we always have to continue to investigate any potential opportunities for the City and you gave the time to take a look at this opportunity.

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

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee