

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RIVERFRONT ACTIVITIES

October 28, 1998

5:00 PM

Chairman Reiniger called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Reiniger, Klock, Sysyn, Thibault, O'Neil

Messrs.: Solicitor Clark, Kevin Clougherty, Rich Davis, Bob MacKenzie,
Peter Ramsey, Tom Sommers, Sean Thomas,

Chairman Reiniger addressed items 3 & 4 of the agenda:

Update relative to Phase I.
Status of the development agreement.

Mr. MacKenzie stated Peter Ramsey will be along in a little bit. The first phase really is hitting the easier section first; that area around Singer Family Park. We are awaiting a contract from them, you didn't get anything yet, Tom, did you.

Solicitor Clark replied no; that their attorney Tony Marts was supposed to be sending something over, but we haven't seen it yet.

Mr. MacKenzie stated I know Tom Sommers is here and Tom has actually been hired by The Riverfront Park Foundation to do the engineering and design for their section of Singer Family Park.

Mr. Sommers stated I'm getting update on where things are from a technical point of view. If you've been down there you know we have an arborist in there now pruning the area out, it's starting to look nice and you're starting to be able to see the views that we knew were there when you get some of the brush out of the way and they are continuing to work over the next couple of weeks on that and it should be done in about two weeks for that phase of the work; that we were

allowed to do by the State without any permits as it fits within the appropriate jurisdiction on something that you can do; that the other thing we are hoping to do this fall and I'm not sure if we're going to get it done is to at least get gravel down on part of this from the South Commercial Street Lot down to the railroad bridge.

The rest of it because permits will be required for shoreline protection and wetlands requirements we expect will be on-going next spring and we'd probably have it done by mid-June which would be paving the first path. We put a package together to go out and select a contractor. The purpose of that is to try and use a design build and at the same time go through some sort of a selection process so when we put a bid package out...it may not be exactly what's done in the final analysis because we would like their input too, but we want to try this as a design build as it seemed like a good section to give it a shot at. So, it is being done that way and making sure of the procurement codes of the City, so that everybody has gone through the selection process of some sort. So, we're looking to have Phase I done by June of next year. We've gotten a lot of cooperation from the State, DES was down and they're really excited about the project. Not just this but the continuation of it.

Mr. Clougherty interjected that the DEC representative is a Manchester guy who lives across the river and helps us out on this.

Mr. Sommers stated the other guy that is going to be involved from the Corps of Engineers and he came to Bob Bershaw and was pretty excited about it, so I think we're going to get positive support; that Judd Gregg has agreed to come and speak at the ground breaking ceremonies on Friday.

Mr. Clougherty asked has anyone every talked to him on that.

Mr. Sommers replied we prepped his staff on it. I don't know if the Mayor has, but I know Peter and I did. We talked to him, we've talked to Jeanne Shaheen's office, we talked to Senator Smith's office, we talked to Congressman Sununu's office...like saying there's something coming just to kind of get them and to generate interest.

Mr. Clougherty asked is the timing now to really formalize that and hit them for...

Mr. MacKenzie stated we know they're interested in, we know that they're real interested in it, what we've really got to tell them is what chunk we want them to fund and how much it's going to cost exactly and what it's going to look like. Once we know that, I think they'll be willing to help out. Now, they're not going to fund the entire thing and we've talked of different ways to fund the different chunks of the Riverwalk, but clearly one chunk needs to be funded through either the state or more likely federal funding sources and once we get that designed or the design fairly well underway which may be next spring at some point, spring/summer I think then if you go to your Congressional delegation and say this is how much money we need, this is what it's for and this is where we think you might be able to find it in the federal funding systems that's when they can be most useful; that is when they can really go out.

Mr. Clougherty stated and they can be most useful...our calendar is with the political calendar, right.

Mr. MacKenzie stated maybe I can step back a little bit and talk about the team and how we're approaching this Peter Ramsey is going to be coming. You see part of the Riverwalk team right here. Tom is going to be the legal advisor to the team and Kevin is going to be the financial advisor. We have a couple of other members, of course, Frank Thomas from the Highway Department and Ron Johnson or Ron Ludwig, myself, and Rich Davis from Intown Manchester. We have selected Peter Ramsey to be the team leader and we think this is the right combination of public/private partnership to get the whole project done. There's strengths to having private entities involved and there is certainly strengths in having public agencies involved because there's a lot of overlap with other issues going on. So, that's how we've structured, we're going to have a fairly simple agreement with The Riverfront Park Foundation and they are moving ahead already with Phase I. We are in the process now...and providing staff support to the team will be on my staff David Fong is both a Planner and architect and he'll be providing staff support to that team. We are in the process right now of kick starting the major engineering for the entire project, we have 11 responses of teams that we would like to help us out, many are good, almost all of them are excellent firms with a lot of experience and just looking at the qualifications is very impressive. So, we're hoping as a team to have a firm selected within the next four to six weeks.

Alderman O'Neil asked their role would be.

Mr. MacKenzie replied their role specifically will be do to the overall design master plan for the entire Riverwalk, to go into the design and engineering portions not being done by The Riverfront Park Foundation and to oversee some new construction administration.

Alderman O'Neil asked would that include the trestle.

Mr. MacKenzie replied that would probably include the trestle work, yes, and that's a section I think the team has talked about; that's a perfect object to be privately-financed. If we name a bridge, we make it look good, do a good job of design that could be financed quite easily and it might be a million dollars and that would take perhaps \$75,000 a year in commitment.

Mr. Clougherty stated have such and such bank or whatever. We'd have them get the advertising and as long as it's done tastefully you'd get that piece taken care of. If they see that that is going to be a major hub we can go out to New Boston, out to Exeter, Concord right at that intersection is critical, so that's a great spot for a lot of traffic.

Alderman O'Neil asked does anybody know talking about the west side, not to shift gears a little bit, but is part of that ISTEA money to repair the trestle over the Piscataquog.

Mr. MacKenzie replied I know there was money to rebuild the bridge over Second Street, they had to take that bridge down because of height restrictions; that there's money there, there's money there to improve a portion of the trail up to the trestle, I'm not sure if there is enough to do the trestle at this point.

Mr. Clougherty stated I didn't think the trestle was included.

Alderman O'Neil stated so that kind of kills the walk right there then.

Mr. Clougherty stated it depends on the money, if we see a little shift here in the economy, everybody's working now, so prices are up here but by the time that everything gets laid out and you're feeling a little soft in the economy you might see some contractor's, you might get a little better cost.

Alderman O'Neil asked is that part of this project, are we talking about tying the whole thing together.

Mr. MacKenzie stated we certainly want to tie the whole thing together because ultimately all these trails are going to fit together and that's really...out of the design workshop we held people said let's make this a system that we can get to the southend of the City, north up on the Heritage Trail, west to the west side out to Goffstown. So, we are working on that and that's where the coordination factor comes in.

Mr. Clougherty stated this is a whole network, it's going to be like an alternative highway system for people to walk or rollerblade or bike on and you're going to be able to do it for all kinds of events.

Solicitor Clark stated obviously the whole hub of this system being at the trestle.

Mr. Clougherty stated that is why that bridge we think has some marketability and if we approach it that way we can get somebody to kick in.

Alderman O'Neil stated, Bob, you talked about an engineering group or team to kind of help with this process and you talked about a master plan, does that include...I know when I walked the land with Tom and Peter that there's two pretty good parcels on both sides of the trestle and I've heard things thrown out not necessarily by Tom or Peter, but from a hotel that fits kind of into the design of being on the river or a corporate headquarters that might do the same, is that going to be part of this master plan, as well.

Mr. MacKenzie stated one of the things that is going to make this Riverwalk come alive is if we can really attract businesses to open their doors onto the Riverwalk and if you look at either attaching the Riverwalk, for example, to The Gateway Building where Jillian's is and further north along the old Seal Tanning building certainly that is where the Riverwalk would just explode. If you've got restaurants there, if you've got boutiques and small shops and beauty salons opening up onto the Riverwalk that is where it really takes off. So, that's why we have to have...and there's another part to this we have to look at the marketing savvy, the business development part that maybe we want to get a hotel; that is where we need a lot of assistance from a lot of people, from Rich Davis who works with a lot of people to Jay Taylor, we know that there is a couple of development interests in the mills along the Millyard and we're trying to make sure that they come in and try to encourage those to really happen.

Alderman O'Neil stated I'm specifically talking the tracks of land north of trestle and just south, the one south appears to be a little smaller.

Solicitor Clark stated we've talked among ourselves that part of the master plan should identify developable areas by private interests rather than by the City.

Alderman Thibault stated I think that's one thing we saw in Peoria that I think was very exciting where there was a company for Japan that came in and spent \$50 million on their riverwalk and I'm sure that's going to spur a lot of activity in that area.

Mr. Clougherty stated one of the things we've got now that we didn't have before is Southwest. With that airline business travel will now look at Manchester and there are a lot of businesses that before were looking at other sites but now that they can put their guys on a plane for discount fares and conduct business in recession proof or at least perceive recession proof fees we've just opened up a whole array of corporate people that we should be contacting. So, as Tom says if this master plan lays out the track of land and gives us all the information and it's seen as something that's environmentally attractive we might get an environmental company to go right down in there and say I want...my image is sports or something like that and this is ideal for me.

Alderman Thibault stated there are several pieces of land like Dan says down there that could be utilized.

Alderman O'Neil stated I had never been to Hobo Jungle before.

Alderman Thibault stated I don't think I can't imagine that you're going to run into too much environmental problems.

Mr. Sommers stated not with the railroad bed because the idea is to keep it basically as it is in terms of its elevation and stuff, but you'll run into it when you go alongside the buildings.

Mr. MacKenzie stated we expect that once we get the team on board it will be early December, it's going to take a couple of months and I think that's the perfect opportunity during the winter months to get some more public participation...the design team...we'd go back out and say okay we've listened to all of these ideas and they will come up with some options and how much to cost and perhaps to bring to some type of public forum and I think that would be an ideal time to really get people involved again because there was a lot of interest when we held that first work session this summer and I think people want to come back and see how

it's progressing. So, to answer your question though I think it's probably going to be three to four months, I would suspect by...I would like to have some information by February of next year including some engineering estimates that we might even be able to go out to bid for another what we call Phase I(a) or I(b).

Alderman O'Neil asked which is.

Mr. MacKenzie stated right now they're working on that section that's actually on the Singer leased property which goes down to the railroad tracks, we have a couple of options about going in different directions. We could perhaps relatively cheaply go further south and try to get down to the Hesser College center. Ideally, we'd like to get up to Jillian's, all the way along that mill building, that is one of the tougher sections, but it would be nice to get to Jillian's and also the other option if at the same time we can entice a private investor and I know Peter's been working hard on that, maybe even work on the bridge across the river. So, we've got kind of three different directions we could go in and I think we need a little more guidance in terms of cost, how we can get some more money as to which direction to really go in.

Mr. Clougherty stated we're going to push to have that done so you have some numbers for the CIP, if we're going to have to come up and ask for funding you're going to have to know what it's for and what phase and what's going to be involved and feel comfortable that it can go through the appropriation process. We're really going to push to have this information so we'll have it in sync for that cycle of the CIP and the budget.

Chairman Reiniger asked what is the strategy for private funding raising at this point in time.

Mr. MacKenzie stated I'm going to turn that over to our team leader here.

Mr. Ramsey stated as you may know we have been meeting all summer long and things are basically pretty good. We have approached several very, very prominent people in town and we had an individual who owned a business and I won't say publicly who it is because I promised I would not, but he is very interested in going forward with some name recognition on that bridge that goes across the river at the old railroad bridge and we're talking, at this point, of about a million dollars. I must say in all honesty, should I say that, that he saw meeting of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on TV and he was disturbed that there were some comments made about the...toward the Riverwalk that were negative and he

told me, I don't want my name to be brought up in those negative terms and that's the dilemma we always have...someone that wants to give money to the City or to the public, it's a tough sell number one to convince them to do that, but it's also a tough sell to convince them that their name won't be battered about in public and that's a tough thing and it was only a couple of minutes long, so that's where that stands.

Mr. MacKenzie stated this is a public session and the Board certainly has the right to ask questions, I know I was there that night when I responded to several questions and concerns, but we do walk a fairly tight tightrope and we certainly would want to encourage the private investment and the more that the Board as a unit supports the project the more likely that we'll get that private investment.

Mr. Ramsey stated if anyone here has any suggestions of somebody who might help us...I have no problem calling anybody here in the city, I have no problem doing that, I've done it before. I think the greatest asset that we have by the way are the people of Manchester. This Riverwalk can change the face of the City and it can happen very quickly, it can change both the east side and the west side of the river and I think it's going to happen. We had some...I've met probably ten times with the staff of the City, these people are capable people who are working to make this happen and we have private individuals who are very excited. I believe this is going to happen, but the only way it's going to happen is if the Mayor, the Aldermen, and the staff and the public sector work together to make it happen, I'm excited.

Alderman Thibault stated one thing I'd like to bring out in talking about all of this is we're looking for public participation in this an awful lot and I'd like to throw this out...as you start working on the east side of the river I think it would behoove you to maybe I don't care if it's just scratching the surface on the other side to give some idea to the west side people as to where this thing is going to happen. A few loads of gravel and a couple of bulldozers in there for two days might do an awful lot to show the people that this is not just an east side thing, it's a City thing so that we get the public participation and encouraged and involved.

Mr. Ramsey stated the City map that we now have that Bob's office had developed, I think we've included on there a couple of red dots which means development on the west side and as Tom said I think Parks & Rec has their money and ready to move ahead on the bikeway from where to where.

Mr. MacKenzie stated ultimately Goffstown is actively doing their section of rail line and ultimately it will connect once we get the trestle done all the way up through Goffstown and maybe into New Boston. It has been slow going because the money wasn't directly granted to the City, the State Highway Department wanted to do the project, so it's been a couple of years since we were actually awarded the project, but we're working to make sure it happens pretty soon.

Alderman O'Neil asked who's the lead on that - Parks & Rec.

Mr. MacKenzie replied Parks & Rec is the one.

Alderman O'Neil asked why isn't this all together. Why do we have one group doing that and a different team doing this.

Mr. MacKenzie replied that section actually started maybe five years ago, so it started before the Riverwalk really got going. I know I had been involved to try and get the ISTEA money from the State granted and it was ultimately approved a couple of years ago, it's been slow because the State has not typically sent this money to the City. We were ready to do the work fairly quickly. The State is going to do it, but they also have other projects to do.

Alderman O'Neil asked can we put these team on that. What concerns me is you guys are working the east side including the trestle, they're doing something on the west side and if the left hand doesn't know what the right hand...

Solicitor Clark interjected Ron's on the team.

Alderman O'Neil stated this happens in the City of Manchester all the time. I know personally I would like to have the same group overseeing the whole thing because it's all in one, that's my personal opinion.

Alderman Klock stated I have to agree with that.

Mr. Ramsey stated I think your point is valid and it's something that the "team" has talked about, we spent a lot of time on this and I spoke to Tim about this too. I don't think anybody is ready at this point to figure out how to go forward structurally and what I mean structurally...who wakes up everyday in the City of Manchester and thinks about the Riverwalk and I don't think we've figured that out yet and I swear to you I'm not looking for a job because I think it's going to be

a full-time job for somebody to wake up everyday and say how do we get that point A connected to point B and I think as a team we have not yet decided that. In fact, I think on our agenda at the next meeting isn't it true we had agenda items to talk about this about how to go forward.

Mr. MacKenzie stated particularly what we're concerned about is when this is built, we have to maintain it properly, we have to schedule the activities, we have to make sure that if a brick pops out or concrete cracks we fix it right away because people notice that after two years if it's not maintained they sense that right off the bat, so we have to find the right way for the long-term how to properly fund and maintain and provide activities on this Riverwalk, we have to find the best way to do that and that's one of the things we're going to look at.

Alderman Sysyn stated you should have one overseer, one team leader.

Mr. Ramsey stated exactly and I don't know if that's a City staff person or whether it's an independent commission or...I don't think any of us do...in Peoria they had an independent commission, Baltimore had an authority, I don't think any of us know the answer to that and frankly it might be as simple as hiring a person and having them either in Intown Manchester or having them in the Planning office, it might be that simple and I think that by the time we meet again hopefully we'll have an answer to that and it's got to be something that all of us think can work.

Chairman Reiniger asked will this be a big enough project that it will demand that type of a full-time individual.

Mr. MacKenzie replied once we get going, yes.

Mr. Ramsey stated in my mind it depends on how big you want to think. If you want this to be an eight foot walkway where every once-in-a-while somebody is going to walk down it then it doesn't require that. If you want this to be an economic development project where we encourage hotels, restaurants, new businesses, where we have connections to the west side and east side, north and south, then I think we need someone who thinks about it every single day. Why can't we have a health center down there, there are all sorts of possibilities, it's up to us to think to get this done and it doesn't have to take ten years, it can be done in three or four years. I don't know if you noticed but Senator Gregg is going to be there Friday, that's a great step. The City of Hartford got \$5 million to complete theirs, why can't Manchester get \$5 million. I'm going to ask him that. It's going all over the country.

Mr. MacKenzie stated I know Hartford worked for seven years to get that money, but it did happen.

Mr. Sommers stated the person who was the director of the riverfront in Peoria had left the job as Economic Development Director for the City and became the Director of the Riverfront and he was directing the programs...they have over 120 days of events they do down along the riverfront out there which includes the directing of the advertising for it, the operations and maintenance, and security and all those things that make it what it is. The other thing they said is that their project's start was originally supposed to be a 10-year project and is now in a 5-year phase. The other thing now is the infusion of money from all different arenas (i.e., private, federal and state) has been incredible since about a year ago. So, what they said was if you get started and show us that you're serious it will come.

Alderman Thibault stated I think it's a good point what Dan brings up that maybe Parks & Rec should have a person that is going to be on their department eventually that would...that's his baby. Maybe not Parks & Rec, but there should be one person that would look at the whole ball and whether it's that department or Planning it doesn't matter, but I think that Dan is right that there should be one person looking at the whole ball instead of a half of it at a time. Who's going to be maintaining it Parks & Rec or who.

Mr. Clougherty stated replied we're not sure yet. The thing we have decided is not to decide. What we don't want to do at this point is go out and say before you have the master plan and know what it's going to look like to try and make decisions about how it's going to be run. I think you have to wait. You've got to be considering this stuff, but once you've got the master plan then you can sit down and say is this more a private sector type of thing or something that's run by the district or is this something that the City should run and what is the cost going to be because it's hard to come up with figures until it goes through the appropriation process and here is the resolution or the organizational stuff required in order to make sure that it's properly structured and it will work and will be what you want it to be.

Alderman Thibault stated that's one thing about Peoria, the neatness and the cleanliness. For instance, their civic center which is 16 years old you could have eaten off any one of those floors, the place was spotless. You'd swear it was just opened yesterday. And, I guess that's the reason the people keep going there.

Mr. Clougherty stated the thing you want to know is make a decision that says Parks this is your baby and then you get out there and they can't do it. So, we don't want to make a commitment to something right now until we know what it's going to be and then when we get down the path we can feel comfortable with the recommendations and not have to back track.

Chairman Reiniger asked what will this Committee have to decide on, if anything. Do we have to enter into a development agreement at some point in time.

Solicitor Clark replied I don't believe you do.

Mr. MacKenzie stated we have a current contract with The Riverfront Park Foundation, we're thinking of keeping it simple and just having it as an addendum to it.

Chairman Reiniger asked is it something that we'd have to vote on at some point in time.

Solicitor Clark replied we'll bring it to you if you want, but I don't think it's critical that you have to.

Mr. Ramsey stated it's taken a while, but I think everyone's finally on the same page. The Mayor's Office seems very interested in this, it's exciting to have the Mayor's Office behind it, it's wonderful and there are a number of Aldermen who care about this and it's never going to happen without it. My goal is to see this thing done in three years, you may call me crazy but I think we can get it done in that kind of time but we have to find some other money and that's not going to be easy and we have to solve these issues as Kevin said. But, I think that within a month or two, probably two months or three months we can come back to you with a straight forward common sense approach where someone can wake up everyday and think how this can get done. But, there are all sorts of good ideas out there and we just have to figure out what's best for Manchester.

Mr. MacKenzie stated I also think the Committee can be very useful when it comes to public participation. There will be points in time where I think we want to go out to the public and perhaps having this Committee...the public knows you very well...kind of leading some of these groups would be useful in getting that public input. Another thing is that this would be a great sounding board to bounce perhaps some crazy ideas off of. I think maybe even at the next meeting I'd like to perhaps have David Fong show some of the Committee some of the conceptual

ideas and perhaps some of the mini-parks that could be done down in that area and maybe have Tom Sommers talk, in more detail, about some of the design elements of the design and Singer Park just to see how the Board's going to react. Because if you think something's crazy or is not going to work we've got to go back to the drawing boards and figure out why.

Mr. Clougherty asked have you all walked the site because we can do all of these presentations but if you don't go down and walk the site you have no idea what we're talking about. We can make arrangements to take the Committee down. at least those that haven't. Now's the time to do it before it gets cold because in the next week or so we've got to do that. But, if you really want to see how the whole thing runs together we really should do that because you're not going to get the full benefit of all of this.

Chairman Reiniger stated it's a great idea, you don't have to meet in an organized fashion do you.

Mr. Clougherty replied however you would want to do it, if you'd want to go as a Committee or if you'd want to go individually, however you would want to do it is fine. But, try and do it before it gets too cold and too wet.

Mr. Ramsey stated we're going to have a number of people over there on Friday and the event should be over in 45 minutes. If anybody wants to walk down there I'd be happy to walk them down at that time.

Alderman O'Neil stated Bob and I met a couple of weeks ago and talked about this. I think image is very important in this whole thing and I really encourage that if we push any phase it would be the phase heading from the trestle southerly...it should be relatively cheap to do and I think if the more people driving up the highway, the more people they see walking for a longer distance the better. The second issue is I do have some concerns about the fact that this team would not be doing that west side portion of it and I think it all ties together and I have concerns that when they try to tie it together it may not be and moved that the "team" would be the lead group on the west side portion also.

Mr. Thomas stated I think we would be supportive of that move, but we'd like to talk to staff first.

Mr. MacKenzie stated we should talk a little bit about this first. The money is allocated specifically to Parks and Rec right now, but I think ultimately that it is up to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen as to who does what and how.

Alderman Thibault duly seconded the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Mr. Davis stated we've been very fortunate in being able to acquire a design studios from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard, it's graduate students and they are now looking at the riverfront and the entire Millyard and kind of coming up with their own views and concepts for a master plan. This is a school exercise and because they're graduate students they're pretty serious about this and have taken the whole project very seriously. Their instructor is a young man from the Boston Redevelopment Authority, actually he's Vice-Chairman and they have been up here for one field trip and will be up on November 13th to present their early work which is kind of work-in-progress at this point. But, they're very interested in trying to get some feedback and some real world opinions and some reactions to what they've done, so I would like to invite all of you and we'll get out a written notice to all of you prior and would like to have this Committee show up and have a look at what the students have done and give them feedback before they finish their project.

Mr. MacKenzie stated there are some rather unique financing methods that we'd perhaps like to talk to the Committee about in the future and ways that we see...we don't have all the exact dollars but we're starting to have some ideas on how to minimize the City property tax general obligation bonds and try to maximize other funding sources. So, at one of the future meetings we'd kind of like to sketch that out and go over what the options are and see if any of these ideas are too off the wall.

Mr. Clougherty stated the things that other cities are using are not off the wall, but may be new to us.

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

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee