SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON RIVERFRONT ACTIVITIES

May 18, 1999 **5:15 PM**

In the absence of the Chairman, the Clerk called the meeting to order at the appropriate time.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Absent: Alderman Reiniger

Messrs: T. Sommers, P. Ramsey, H. Alinger, J. Prose, R. MacKenzie, Alderman Cashin

The Clerk noted that in the absence of Chairman Reiniger, a motion is in order to elect a Chairman Pro-Tem.

On motion of Alderman Thibault, duly seconded by Alderman Sysyn, it was voted to elect Alderman O'Neil as Chairman Pro-Tem.

Chairman O'Neil addressed Item 3 of the agenda:

Update on Phase I of riverwalk.

Mr. Sommers stated just to let you know we are going to put a set of plans out to bid. We have asked LDR in the meantime to help us embellish some of this and they came up with this really pretty neat plan. Just to quickly bring you up-to-date, Phase I-A is from the north end, South Commercial Street parking lot down to a location just north of the railroad bridge which is located just off of this plan. This is a pretty large scale. Singer Family Park is right here. What we have done is we have come up with the original walkway, which was on the lower tier as we call it. Most of you have been down there and seen it. We also included an additional walkway on the upper tier. One of LDR's biggest points to us is that first of all you have to make this thing…this is going to be the first phase of something and you have to really make it grab people's attention and you have to connect between your existing activities and what you want to have happen in

order to make is successful. In this plan, we are doing both. We have a number of nodes that are being proposed along here. This is an embellishment of a couple of these nodes in which we can have seating, we will have a rail system in front and these will be done up with landscape features, walls, really these things are going to be done up nicely to set this off. We feel we can afford to put two of these in and then add this one in and then we are going to have to be looking for donations and we are going to go to different groups and ask if they would like to sponsor one for some of these other nodes that we would like to put in later on. We are setting this up so that you are not taking anything away by doing it.

Alderman Klock asked where is the end right there.

Mr. Sommers answered this is at the South Commercial Street lot. What we are going to do is round it off. It is a square off now and this is right where the sign is. We are going to round that off so you get more of a feel. We will lose a couple of parking spaces but that is all right. You will get a better feel for this being a real entrance into this site. We are going to also, there is a ditch out along here and we are going to cover that, flatten it out and try to make this whole thing work. It is going to be with respect to the field so that this is not a steep slope coming down anymore; it is a relatively flat slope. We will grass that. We are going to be doing some work on the upper hill in terms of grading. We are going to do some pre-planning. There are things that have to be done to be added on and stuff. We are right now out to bid to contractors to get a contractor on board and to get this piece of it moving. We are hoping to be out working in mid to late June.

Alderman Klock asked how long will the process take.

Mr. Sommers answered my thought process is that it will probably take, depending on how much we do, anywhere from two to four months.

Chairman O'Neil asked, Tom, are you showing a different type of surface at the nodes.

Mr. Sommers answered yes.

Chairman O'Neil asked does that affect people biking or rollerblading or any of that stuff.

Mr. Sommers answered rollerblading it might affect them a little bit but they should be able to see it and come through it okay. It is going to be a paver type system so you will get a little rougher ride at that point, but it is fairly short and you just have to go through it and slow down.

Chairman O'Neil asked roughly how wide is the walk.

Mr. Sommers answered the walkway itself is going to be around 10’ to 12’ wide. It is basically a paved walkway with either granite or concrete edging. It is not raised curbing. It is going to be flush but the idea of the edging is to set it off and give it a nice look.

Chairman O'Neil asked would it be able to support and I know you wouldn’t want to do this regularly, but some sort of service vehicle.

Mr. Sommers answered yes, we have to because this is also the City sewer and we have to let the trucks through. In fact, we have designed these so a truck can slide through here.

Alderman Thibault asked are these streets here.

Mr. Sommers answered no, these are walks.

Alderman Thibault asked the straight lines there.

Mr. Sommers answered these are going to be stairways from the top so you are going to be able to come down stairways. These ramps come down and are handicap accessible so there are ways to get around everything and like I said the whole idea of connecting the existing field to this to really start…it is going to do two things. It is going to be a unique thing itself but it is really going to start setting off Singer Field and give it some flare.

Chairman O'Neil asked is that Phase I or I-A that you are showing.

Mr. Sommers answered this is I-A. I is three pieces. It is I-A, B, and C. B is the next piece down to Jac Pac, Sundial Avenue. That is the piece that I think you have on your agenda for us to move forward with. I-C is the bridge, which we will talk about later. The railroad bridge.

Alderman Klock stated and you said that a vehicle like an ambulance could get down that.

Mr. Sommers answered yes. In fact now we have two ways to do it because you can go the upper trail or the lower trail.

Alderman Klock asked what kind of lighting is going to be down there for safety measures.

Mr. Sommers answered lamps like this every 75’ typically.

Chairman O'Neil asked is it similar to the type of light they put in at Bronstein. It lights up the park pretty good.

Mr. Sommers answered these will have a good effect of lighting down through it and I believe that at these nodes we will probably look at some low-level lighting. Part of this is to set it off at night and part of it is to provide safety.

Chairman O'Neil stated the trend now is to get away from that softer yellow light and getting more toward the white bright light.

Alderman Klock asked as Chief Driscoll taken a look at this at all.

Mr. Sommers answered he has looked at it preliminarily. He wanted to make sure that there were ways of getting around things, which is part of the reason we did what we did. He will be looking at it again. He was pretty excited about it because obviously it makes it public and I think it makes his job better.

Chairman O'Neil asked do you want to talk about the other parts of Phase I now or do you want to get into that later.

Mr. Sommers answered what we were hoping to do is get into the whole thing a little bit in terms of some of the additions and changes we have made. I will preface it by telling you that everything right now in terms of these changes and ideas are thoughts. They are not cast in stone. We are also looking for feedback on these things.

Alderman Thibault asked this extra road or path that you have on here, how does that affect the cost of the project.

Mr. Sommers answered a lot. It will affect the cost of the project. We felt that what affects the cost of the project probably more are these nodes. We were able to…the original project as costed was a 15’path on the bottom. That has been cut down but not because of cost but because we felt that it would fit better and we were able to move to fit it up in here and use some of it up in there. There are some additional costs that we are within our program. Because I don’t have a bid back, we have estimated around, without the nodes, our estimate right now is around $200,000. The nodes are coming in anywhere from $40,000 to $60,000 so there are some add-ons with those. We are fitting into our program of where we wanted to be.

Mr. MacKenzie stated we felt it was important to do this first section right so that when people come up the highway they get a strong visual impact and will really be intrigued enough to come down and visit this area. I think that this plan is evolving into something that was quality and frankly the prices that I hear that are coming in are still within our budget. We had a ballpark estimate of roughly $350,000 for this first phase, I-A. We are still in that ballpark.

Chairman O'Neil asked is that design and construction or just construction.

Mr. Sommers answered total.

Alderman Thibault stated I think the good thing about it is that the people who don't want to walk all the way, lets say, to Jac Pac can go right around that whole square and if they want to take a walk around the river…I think it is a good idea.

Mr. Sommers stated probably in deference to cost, initially, the extension of Jac Pac will probably reduce a little bit what we do initially to save money there and then eventually as this thing gains popularity we can add to that. The point of this is…the message we have gotten and I take LDR to hear because they have done a lot of these in a lot of places, is that you have to start the thing off looking really nice.

Mr. Alinger stated I will highlight some changes and alternatives that we have been looking at in the various districts. We have five different districts and we are going to talk a little bit about each one of those tonight. We are going to start out with the south and work north. We will talk about the south side and then we will talk about the West Side. Nick Colagro is going to talk about the bridge. We have some very exciting ideas about the architecture of the pedestrian bridge and then we are going to kind of move forward and talk about Gateway and Granite Street and Amoskeag. We want to walk through that fairly quickly in the next 20 minutes or so and then EDP is going to talk about some of the economic impacts and some more details that they have done on that and management strategies and some other things. So starting at the south end, you will recall that we had identified some concepts that looked at the possibility of a softball field and some enhancements for Singer Park and the Riverwalk as Tom just walked you through. One of the comments that we heard and one of the things that was raised was what was the possibility of doing a minor league stadium in this area. We did some testing on that and looked at some alternatives and in fact we have done a plan that showed how it might work. The site is fairly tight. To fit a stadium on the site as you might imagine this is the footprint of what could be like a 6,000-seat stadium, which would accommodate AA Minor League Baseball. Basically, it is going north to northwest, which is acceptable. You can see it is pinched in the site. We don't have a lot to venture this way. The way we suggest it could work is we have

a turn at the end of Commercial Street and we have access that bypasses the field so that you come on and would have an architectural feature here that would be very strong coming down Commercial Street. There would be no question about the presence of this and also the visibility from the river, which we think would be very positive. Circulation wise, you would pass the field and pass Singer Park and then in the long term we are saying ultimately that we will have a service drive that will go all the way to Sundial Avenue. Obviously that would do a couple of things for you. Obviously it improves the access for the whole area, it gives us the ability if we want to do residential or something else here long-term we sort of open up this area maybe for some other use even though we don't have a lot of land. With this, we looked at circulation and parking here and parking is really key for the field as you can imagine. Typically the program for these kind of fields is one space per three seats so we would need 2,000 parking spaces available somehow and again they don't need to be next door but they have to be in the vicinity or you have to get people to them. So, we started to look at the parking options. One of the things we talked about originally in this plan was some kind of a parking deck at the south end of Langer Place and we think that still makes sense because it gives you proximity parking right here. That would pick up a portion of our needs. We would probably have to continue to look at a deck here and this sort of Horace at Langer Place that we talked about before and then there is a possibility that we might have to look at additional parking in other areas. Unfortunately, or fortunately we have got fixed development up here at this site and we have fixed development at the TV station so we have to look farther for additional structured parking. Again, maybe it could be parking shared with the civic center or the Millyard or some other use but it is going to have to be a little farther away. We have suggested to get as much surface parking as we can tucked up here on this property. Also, in this access scheme if we bring access through here we would also try to replace some of the parking here. As we all know there is a big surface lot here that Singer field uses so you have a walking issue here to get to the field so we started to think that maybe we could figure out if there is a way to get parking more internal that works for them closer. This is about 180 parking spaces right here that looks fairly well designed. In fact, it does not affect the Riverwalk and gives the feel of a good parking resource.

Chairman O'Neil asked does the City own that land now.

Mr. Alinger answered no.

Chairman O'Neil asked how about the Rubenstein property.

Mr. Calagro answered the City has communicated with them.

Chairman O'Neil asked does anyone know where we stand with them.

Mr. Sommers answered no. I do know that for this particular proposal we need to get that property.

Chairman O'Neil stated no matter what happens down there that piece of property is very important to this whole thing.

Mr. Sommers replied I will preface everything by saying that we are coming up with these concepts but we also recognize that there are certain limitations and one of them is you have to make sure that the landowners are spoken with and we need to let them know what is going on before we sit there and say yes, we are going to do this.

Alderman Klock asked what would you do if it wasn't a ballpark.

Mr. Alinger answered there are a couple of different options we looked at and the first one was to say you could do a smaller softball field like this. We did two other alternatives, which I have got buried in my roll of drawings but I can just describe them to you. One idea was to do more of just a passive open space, a passive playing field that could either be flat and used as a back-up for soccer that is a more informal playing field. The other idea as that we could regrade this area and get some slope in here and you could actually create a mini-park which might have an amphitheater and just a sloping terrace and wouldn't be the same kind of venue you would have here. For a music event or something you could take that small scale with a small performing area and again this is a passive park. We still think that is a viable option.

Chairman O'Neil asked where people would sit on the lawn, etc.

Mr. Alinger answered yes, sit on the grass and we would have a little amphitheater and a little stage or something here and it would be a nice passive space. That is a viable option. The playing field is an option for softball or a minor league stadium. There are actually three or four options. Again, depending on the interest level if we could figure out a way to deal with parking, we could open this up as green space if we had Rubenstein and redeveloped the parking and then it could involve other uses as the demand came up.

Chairman O'Neil asked is there that much of a difference between a minor league field and softball field.

Mr. Alinger answered yes. The stands and the press box and depending on the high end and suites and everything take up a lot more space. Jim Prose has just done kind of a summary of some of the issues relating to baseball and I want to touch on those quickly.

Mr. Prose stated a baseball park generates about 286,000 attendance for AA. I guess the closest team is Portland and they had 399,000 last year. Attendance has been real good. This level park is 6,000 seats. They like to see one parking space per three seats, which is roughly 2,000 spaces. Average attendance is something like 3,200 a game. The economic impacts are significant. There have been various studies - $8 to $12 million as far as economic impact from such a facility and costs are all over the place. It depends on if you own the land or you don't own the land. As low as $6 million and as high as $20 million. I think the field down in Lowell was about $12 or $13 million including the $1 million that went into the Riverwalk. They put one in West Michigan for $6 million. Again, it depends on the level of finish and if you are sitting on bleachers or in more comfortable seats, are their luxury boxes, are their facilities under the stand or not under the stand.

Alderman Thibault stated I would be a little concerned about that stadium because where we have tried this before several years back we had the Yankees in Manchester and they just didn't go anywhere.

Mr. Sommers replied let me make a point. You can be doing what we are talking about here or something less and that doesn't preclude this eventually.

Alderman Thibault asked so you always have the option of doing it. Is that what you are saying?

Mr. Sommers answered what I am saying is you could eventually say well okay now the time has come that we should do this. I don't know what the timing is, is what I am telling you. What I am saying is that the lesser ones don't preclude this from happening. What you have to recognize is that you have to then do something to get the parking that you need if you are going to do it.

Mr. Calagro stated I am not sure if I have spoken to anybody since this became public that wants the City to fund it. It would have to be a private/public partnership with an owner just like we are doing with the civic center and guarantee the people of Manchester that it would be a viable business. I think there is still work to be done.

Alderman Thibault stated in that sense it is probably a little easier but I think that maybe we could start with this idea and like you said eventually end up with that if the demand is there and the people are there.

Alderman Klock asked isn't there a tank of some sort under here that the EPA is making the City…

Mr. Prose answered I think it is in here.

Alderman Klock asked how does that affect this whole plan in terms of building the Riverwalk, etc.

Mr. MacKenzie stated I think you are talking about the EPA's storm water separation system. This is the location that at some point some day the City will have to do some separation and put in what is called a swirl separation chamber. Those, there are a few different sites being looked at right now. I think Highway is looking for a location just south of the pedestrian bridge. It is possible that some day when that comes back to the City that we will have to look at these sites because the main cemetery brook interceptor comes down here and funnels right in this area.

Alderman Klock stated I thought one problem with the civic center and having the civic center around this site was because of that tank and that Singer Park can be basically rolled up sort to speak in order to…so what are the ramifications if say we do something like this tomorrow.

Mr. Alinger answered I think the one thing that the sewer experts said is the outflow is right here that runs right down all the way to Elliot Hospital. It is a gigantic, big pipe and runs right down here. There is the outflow right there and I think they have all said that it would be south of this. They are looking at this area. It is probably six, seven, eight or even nine years away.

Mr. Sommers stated I think that after Singer Park went in they changed their thought process in terms of where to put it. The second thing that I understand is that with the agreement that the City now has, they are not doing that right away. That is maybe 10 or 15 years away.

Mr. MacKenzie stated we have a 10-year grace period in essence. The proposal to move it further down though does hinge on a more experimental technology. There is still a potential to go to very large tanks and re-evaluate where this will go.

Alderman Thibault asked is there a way that we can get a feel for that before we start all of this.

Mr. MacKenzie answered if we were building something like a minor league ball field, yes, we would probably want to come to a specific agreement with the EPA because we could not be putting in over a $10 million investment and have it change. We would have to come to an agreement.

Mr. Alinger stated actually there are a lot of things to think about relative to this like parking and how you phase it and the timing. I just wanted to touch on the fact that it looks like, based on the scale, that the boat launch that exists there today will probably have to be relocated or removed just given the scale of all of this. We just have to look at is there an alternative location for that or what happens with the boat launch.

Mr. Prose stated that is if we go with a stadium. These other plans have shown how you can accommodate them and retain them. I would like to just jump across to the West Side and talk about the bridge and how we tie those together.

Chairman O'Neil recognized Alderman Cashin.

Mr. Alinger stated the focus on the west side, of course the primary focus to begin with is to establish the linkage and to do that through converting the existing rail bridge to a pedestrian bridge and then making the connection to the Piscatquog Trail that is being designed and planned as we speak. What we have tried to do is just look at some opportunities in this immediate vicinity to see how we make the most out of this planned link and recreational activities. We started looking at the bridge and the landing zone as one of the key areas to start to think about how that works, what happens as you come down on land, how we take advantage of this site and we have a couple of photo boards to show you the area. We have an adjacent site. This is the property right next to the site. We thought that was an opportunity to think about could we tie that in and we started to think about this crossing and doing a pedestrian bridge across the street, which we think is key to keep this linkage going. Of course, we get to add crossings down here but the idea of doing a bridge at that point since you are up in air...

Alderman Thibault interjected there is already a railroad bridge there isn’t there.

Mr. Alinger stated there was one but it was taken done. The foundation is there. We are suggesting that it be a prefabricated manufactured bridge that could be dropped over to complete that. Then we looked at opportunities to create some kind of identify. We thought, for example, that there could be some kind of a feature like a pavilion or something up top here that gives it some special character. Then we started thinking about this area next to it where there could be a mini park. Could it include a playground? We even started to think about the skateboard park that is planned for here and could it be here or is it better at this tie. Since we thought about that we have had more conversations with the Parks & Recreation folks and it seems like the skateboard park is pretty well along in its planning so I think the notion is that it will continue and that will happen there.

The idea of creating some kind of mini park on this site we think could be very positive.

Chairman O'Neil asked do we need something from the State on that.

Alderman Thibault answered as far as I know, Highway has it all worked out.

Mr. Alinger answered we looked at the opportunities again for pedestrians to come down. This is the old, there is a rail spur that is graded like this and you can obviously bring pedestrians down to this lower level. Again, this property is commercially held but if the City were to acquire it this would be an opportunity for some parking. Again, the idea of identify, we think, is very important. For example, at the skateboard park maybe there is some kind of a gateway statement that starts to happen to let you know that you are approaching the downtown. We think this edge on Granite Street is really important. Ultimately, we would like to see some kind of linkage in terms of a striped bike lane or an improved sidewalk system or something that either takes you down the main street or along this street to tie these two together and then start to look at how you could extend that down to Bass Island Park. Bass Island Park, of course, is very nice and what we see from a big picture looking at that is we would like to consider the opportunity to tie this area to the east of that which is the site where there is the blacksmith shop and this mulch yard and that could be ultimately acquired. We know it is on some kind of a State list for environmental protection. If this site could be tied into a park system, again, we think it is an opportunity because it is surrounded by water and it could be very nice from a recreation standpoint. Again, this may be an issue in the longer term but I think it is something to think about. The State has looked at it a little bit and if there were some focus on that, it could be a very nice and again there might be some environmental litigation that has to happen but it could be a nice adjunct, again, based on its location on the waterfront and everything else it makes sense for open space. We also thought about Sweeney Park a little bit. You have the police sub-station and you have some nice recreational facilities. Again, I think it may just be a matter of signing from the trail that Sweeney Park is adjacent and trying to make those two try to fit together and maybe some subtle things could be done to tie that in to this whole system. Does anybody have any questions or thoughts regarding these sites we are showing?

Alderman Klock asked are we going to put any kind of kiosks up pointing out measurements of miles or any historic markers.

Mr. Alinger answered yes. Again, I think there is another group that is working literally on the planning and design of this but I would assume that is something they are factoring in. That is something we will be looking at on the Riverwalk.

Mr. Sommers stated one thing I would like to point out is that on the Riverwalk itself we intend to bring Land Works who is doing the downtown kiosk design so as part of our final design program we are asking them to get involved to do that component of it so that it all fits together. They are doing a complete interpretive by-way signage program basically to bring people in from the highway and into the area and then it goes from vehicular signage down to pedestrian signage and kiosks. A good city to go look at is Lowell, MA. They have done a pretty good job and you can really see the difference in terms of how you go into the City. You can really pick out the areas you want to go to. That is the vision I have. It is all part of that project.

Chairman O'Neil stated I am not convinced that the West Side portion has been included in this whole general discussion. There has been some general discussion tonight but there has been that other project where money was already funded, Federal money. Has there been coordination so that this whole thing ties together?

Mr. MacKenzie replied we are bringing it closer together. That was actually more advanced than this plan. They are beyond the planning stage and into design but we are bringing that closer together. Certainly this is the connection where we put everything together. There are still some issues that we have to work out with Parks & Recreation.

Chairman O'Neil stated that was a vote of the Board to do that so we have to make sure that it is carried out. I do know there is an issue over there that I caught some wind of taking the path way out of the way to get around an easement problem and I have talked to Alderman Cashin about it as well as the Mayor and I think they are both willing to sit down with the owner of that property to see if they can try to work something out so that we get a nice straight line with this and not designing this thing so that it goes three or four blocks out of the way just to avoid that.

Alderman Thibault asked did he acquire this from the City or did he acquire this from Boston & Maine.

Alderman Cashin answered it was Boston & Maine right away so he must have acquired it from them. I have known Jack for awhile. Has anybody talked to him at all?

Mr. Alinger replied I don’t know.

Alderman Thibault moved to have Alderman Cashin and Mayor Wieczorek talk to the owner of Tires, Inc. regarding acquiring his property. Alderman Sysyn duly seconded the motion. Chairman O'Neil called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Mr. Calagro stated the next topic is the bridge itself. This is the bridge as it currently looks. This is actually looking from the West Side back over to the East Side. This is the part going over 293. Some of the difficulties on this is it is actually 6' off the ground and we have to go over the top of this part because there is too much structural stuff on the inside and then we have to ramp back down to here and then straight across. I think there is a gas line that comes over. This is a rendition of how it could look. Building off some of the foundation work that you already have we can create some of these granite tiers in keeping with some of the other stuff that you have on the Mill buildings right now, especially on the west side. We are thinking about bringing some of that imagery back here and also this bridge is a lot narrower than this one. This is about 8' and this one is 14'. We can widen the bridge and then a possibility to have signage. An arch with the name of the Riverwalk, etc.

Mr. Sommers stated this is a decorative art not a structural art so there is a big difference in price.

Mr. Calagro stated then just keeping in some of the same lights that we had talked about. The part that actually goes under the Riverwalk itself may be another small arch.

Chairman O'Neil asked is there a ballpark cost for this.

Mr. Sommers answered we originally programmed $1 million for this project and we are going through a cost estimate on this in the next week or so.

Chairman O'Neil asked that is just from where you get on it to where you get off it. That doesn't include anything else?

Mr. Sommers answered yes and that was programmed before we saw this but we did program in that it would be something pretty special so I am hoping that will cover it.

Alderman Thibault asked didn't I hear you saying before that you were looking for some kind of sponsor to sponsor part or most of that bridge.

Chairman O'Neil asked structurally, everything there looks like it could be utilized.

Mr. Sommers answered I think everything there is fine. If you remember this was a railroad bridge and if you consider what will go over this in terms of pedestrians and bikes versus a railroad…will there have to be some repair work done, probably. In talking with the Highway Department today, they said that they were looking at…it is their job as a City-owned bridge to look at repairs of that and they are doing so now. We don't want to get into repainting it. It is black and it probably has lead paint from the old days. What we want to do is just do whatever minor fixes we might have to and move on with it but structurally I feel, from everything I have seen about it and from what my structural engineers tell me, it looks in pretty good shape.

Chairman O'Neil asked what phase is this.

Mr. Sommers answered Phase I-C. I tell you I would like to see this sooner than later because I think this is a neat connection and also if you think about this it makes a real statement coming into downtown Manchester with an arch like this.

Mr. MacKenzie stated this would be a perfect segment to get some support from the private sector. If we can get a guarantee of the debt service on this project we can move ahead because we are going to enter fairly soon into the final design phase. If everybody likes the concept, we will move into final design and we will actually have something to show somebody. This is the perfect piece if somebody wants to donate some money or dedicate a long-term stream of money that we can then bond to accomplish it. This is the perfect piece.

Alderman Klock asked when you are talking about private contributors, it is a one-time shot or are they going to be continuing to maintain the bridge. What is the connection, the partnership that we are looking at?

Mr. MacKenzie answered at the present time, we are looking for a one-time shot to get it built but of course there is a bigger issue of how we maintain the entire Riverwalk system in the long-term. We have asked the consultants to give us some ideas on that. We would love to see a recurring fund that we can find to dedicate for the maintenance of the entire Riverwalk system. We think that is really important. We can build this, I believe, and do a good job but 20 years from now it is going to have to look as good as it does the first day it opened and that requires a dedicated fund.

Mr. Ramsey stated everybody on the Riverwalk Team that has been meeting now for over a year think that this is the most important part because it connects the City. It is really important to connect both the West and East side. I think everybody should absolutely commit to that. Plus it is a visual statement. You

drive down the highway. I don't know if you have noticed but there are new T-shirts all around town that say "Manchester on the Merrimack" and that says a lot.

Chairman O'Neil asked how do you prevent it from getting too gaudy where it is like a billboard. You have to control that somewhat, right?

Mr. Ramsey answered you have to remember that it is a visual statement for Manchester.

Mr. Sommers stated over the highway, the State will have some say in that anyway. They aren't going to let you just putting anything up right there. That is there highway. We think it needs to be a real civic statement.

Alderman Thibault stated I don't know if you heard this but I just read in the paper the other day that Londonderry has been given the rights to build a dam. I wonder if this will affect the water level of this area.

Mr. Sommers asked on the Merrimack River.

Alderman Thibault answered didn't I just see that yesterday that the State finally agreed to let Derry or Londonderry, maybe I am making a mistake.

Mr. Sommers replied it couldn't be Derry because they are not on the Merrimack.

Alderman Thibault stated well it was someplace on the Merrimack and they want to build a power plant.

Mr. Sommers replied that is different. That is a gas power plant going in the northern Londonderry industrial area.

Alderman Klock asked could you rehash the schedule for all of these things in terms of bid processes and when you are going to come to the Board.

Mr. Sommers answered that is really jumping ahead. What you are seeing now is the master plan. From this, design will occur. The design will take and we will put a schedule together but some design will probably begin this fall and be done in the winter and go out to bid in the spring. Phase I-A, the first thing that we showed you, has already gone out. We are going to add things to it and work with a contractor through the Riverfront Park Foundation and that will be moving right away. We would like to then work from there on the next phase, which would probably, my guess, is I-B which is the southern connection. I-C, depending on how things go and then Phase II which is the Langer building and South Commercial Street building. I don't know the exact schedule but we will be

laying that out as part of the program that we are putting together. This is the step before that. The thought process in this whole thing is that if we can fund it properly, private and public, we feel that once we get it moving you will start to see the private step forward. I have already been talking to owners and they like what they are seeing and they are talking about spending money. Much more than they were three or four years ago. We are probably looking at a five year project that may be spread out if things don't work to a ten year project but we want to make it contiguous so that what we get is something that people can see grow so that we don’t just piece meal it all over the place. So starting at Singer Family Park and growing configuratively so that you get value for everything you are doing.

Chairman O'Neil asked is I-B designed yet.

Mr. Sommers answered no.

Chairman O'Neil asked what would be the time frame on that.

Mr. Sommers answered it would probably take about a month. It is pretty simple.

Chairman O'Neil asked is it possible to have that done within this construction season.

Mr. Sommers answered it is possible. It would be late in the year. If we could use the same contractor and do it through Riverfront Park, we could do that.

Mr. MacKenzie stated I would note that we remember the past interest in the Committee in moving that I-B ahead. There are some issues further down with Jac Pac that we will have to resolve.

Chairman O'Neil stated those can be resolved. I think the importance of this I-B is that it continues to show that we are aggressive, we are serious about this Riverwalk and it might start opening more doors for the private donations.

Mr. Sommers replied another advantage to I-B is that it is inexpensive.

Mr. Ramsey stated it is the least amount of permitting and it is the least expensive.

Chairman O'Neil asked where else do we want to go.

Mr. Sommers asked do you want to touch on Arms Park. We have enough here to go on for hours. Why don’t we talk a little bit about the arcade idea through the Langer and Warner building.

Mr. Calagro stated the Langer building is right here. Granite Street and singer Park are over here and we want to build an arcade on the inside of the building. It is open to the air.

Alderman Thibault asked is that all set now. Has the owner agreed to this? I know there was a question last time.

Mr. Sommers answered the owners, there are three of them and we know two of them, are very excited about this idea and are open to the inside arcade. They haven't seen the drawing yet. They do know that this is what the intent is.

Mr. Calagro stated part of the idea is back here there would be a parking deck and you actually have a service street here with two decks of parking and from this upper parking you can come across and down one floor to the main gallery. That is what I have showed coming over and coming down. I wanted to show the Riverwalk elevation. This is a blow up of that building. This would go off to Singer Park. We would have ramps for the handicapped here and down which eventually goes underneath the Granite Street Bridge. You can come off and cross over the street so anyone coming over from the West Side can come down Granite Street and access that.

Chairman O'Neil asked do you think you will be able to access it from this sidewalk up here.

Mr. Calagro answered some of those atrium spaces could be in there and we would just punch it out in different spots. You would have to go through with the building owners and it opens up a lot of possibilities here looking up toward the Riverwalk and you could see some of the overlooks here through and here is a look beyond and we could get some really nice volume space. We can start to connect all the floors.

Mr. Alinger stated just quickly I will show you a couple of other ideas that are in the works. The other thing we have been looking at is this area around Dean Kamen's building and looking at the idea of a courtyard here that could be sort of public and private with the future connection of Pandora. This was kind of a quick plan we did of that area that shows how you make this connection. This is from Pandora and this would be the same orientation. We could create a space there. That again is what we are calling a focal point. You could have public art; you could have outdoor activities. You could have special things happen but also you might have these buildings fill out. There is some question about whether or not they want to make part of these spaces more private. I think it is a joint effort. We will work with them to work that out. I think we can satisfy both needs.

Chairman O'Neil asked, Mr. Alinger, would that section most likely there be privately funded.

Mr. Alinger answered a good part of it will be private. There might be some sharing and some public money as well, particularly at least the river's edge. I think it is a combination. This is a quick sketch we did and it kind of shows you the view from the street looking back into this kind of arcade and the idea of this courtyard beyond. I will just pass that around. One of the things we thought about was the possibility of securing this. Maybe it has a fence or security at night and is open during the day. We have shown this to Dean Kamen's group and have had preliminary discussions with them. Basically, we are getting good vibes from them. Let me show you just one or two other things. Up at Arms Park, the other thing that we have looked at is a little bit different than our original plan. If you remember when we originally looked at Arms Park we talked about relocating it and creating a deck here or a couple of parking decks here and creating a major green space. When we looked at this site next to the Bedford lot, we realized that this is a power plant building and there is infrastructure and it is not really something you can remove. We tried to find another home for parking in this area and we started to look at the idea of a parking deck on this side of Commercial Street, on the water side, with the idea that if you put a major deck there in fact you can have new development in front of it. What this starts to give you is for UNH and other users that are there, it starts to give you continuity of development all around the edge which would be waterfront development and development on this edge. The idea of redefining this park and reactivating all these edges, UNH could potentially take the first floor of it, they could have a bookstore or a café and there could be offices or residential areas above. It is a development opportunity and a new opportunity that we think could, and again you have to think about the timing and when it would make sense but it could come on line and really help activate this whole area.

Alderman Klock asked when you talk about parking decks, are you talking multi-level.

Mr. Alinger answered in this case probably three levels. It might just be one level above the grade of the street. It wouldn't be that dominant from the street.

Mr. Sommers stated one thing we should also point out is that any of these options around Arms Park, because parking is so sensitive, would have to be done and could only really be done in conjunction with parking. Again, it is a trade-off. I want to make sure that it is clear to people that this is a project that, when we start saying we are going to put green space in, we are taking parking and are going to have to replace it immediately.

Mr. Alinger stated we think this is a huge amenity for Manchester.

Chairman O'Neil asked this is Phase II from the beginning of the Gateway building to here.

Mr. Sommers answered the Gateway building is Phase II up to the Waumbec building. I think that is a large part of the picture that we wanted to show. We want to talk a little bit about the economic stuff and a little bit about the management program.

Mr. Prose stated he has alluded to some of the questions about who manages it, how does it get paid for and what have you. We have taken an initial look at what the management options might be for the Riverwalk and we looked at it basically by looking at some case studies. On the second sheet are some of the case studies that we have looked at in terms of other areas and what other communities have done in terms of management entities. What some other localities have done in terms of management approaches. Basically, the question first of all is what is the function management wise of a management entity. What would they be doing in terms of responsibility and we have listed on Item 1 the management responsibilities and what does this entity, organization or whatever who is responsible for the Riverwalk, what do they do. Well, they administer the whole operation. They do the type of meetings we are doing and they coordinate with various entities. Initially, they are primarily a development entity. They are constructing a facility. They are responsible for bids. They are responsible for construction management. They are responsible for getting things done. After that happens and this probably depends on funding availability, you know a five-year program or thereabouts, then they move into a maintenance function. How you maintain the facility, how you make sure there are people who make sure that the light bulbs are changed and the place is maintained operationally? How do they coordinate with the private sector and the private sector investment for the various cost sharing that we see happening. How do they do the day-to-day operations and make sure that the lights go on and the place is swept? Who does the marketing and merchandising? If somebody is responsible for the maintenance, you also want them responsible for the marketing. What you wind up doing is finding out that somebody is deciding to fix the pavers the same day the festival program is going on. You also want them to be responsible for security. It doesn't mean that they develop their own police force of their own security force, but they are coordinating all of these functions. The same thing with programming events, whether that is Intown Manchester, the City or whoever is doing it. One entity needs to coordinate it and one entity needs to be responsible fiscally for the accounting. Those are the functions. What we have looked at on Page 2, in looking at the examples in other localities whether it is the Peoria's or the San Antonio's, what have they done and what has been successful.

One of the things we noted is the creation of some type of special entity independent of the traditional government process, creating a 501C3 development corporation or whatever you want to call it that would be responsible. That means that procurement is a lot easier than the standard government procurement. If they have got to get somebody to go in and fix something, they can do that quickly. If they have got to hire somebody for a management program, they can do that quickly. It is also important, based on experience in all of the localities, that this entity, this organization has as a single role and single responsibility, the Riverwalk area. It is not a Department of Public Works. It is not a Department of Planning. It is not a general City function, but it is somebody, who every day lives, breathes and has a single mission to oversee the Riverwalk.

Alderman Thibault asked so you are talking about a new department.

Mr. Prose answered a new department, a new entity, whether it is a City department or a separate entity that contracts with the City, those are details. Whatever this entity is, its function is the Riverwalk.

Chairman O'Neil asked I know you have been here a number of times. Would it be similar to Intown or Neighborhood Housing Services?

Mr. Prose answered it could be similar. You have the Manchester Riverfront Development Corporation, the Civic Center Development Corporation, and the Housing Authority. There are plenty of entities in this locality and other localities that have done that and have been responsible for the riverwalks. North Coast Harbor in Cleveland is responsible for the development of the Cleveland waterfront and the maintenance of such. There is a private entity for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. When you walk outside the Hall of Flame, the plaza is funded by Key Bank and then you go a little farther and you are actually in a park that the State funded. As you walk along the Cleveland waterfront, there are a bunch of entities that are responsible for doing it, but all of that was done by the North Coast Development Corporation which originally was funded both by the City and by something called Cleveland Tomorrow which is the big corporations and that is how they seeded it in terms of getting the money started. It is a single role of responsibility. They had a dedicated, adequate staff to do the administration. They didn't have staff to do the security or to sweep, they contracted out or city agencies did that but they had internal management staff that were responsible for administering, managing and coordinating and that is the type of thing we would like to see here. Often, and the way they are set-up is they sunset. They have a particular function and they are testing out that function. There is a five-year or three-year period in which they move from a development entity to a start-up entity. When they move to something that is almost totally dependent on outside funding to something that has a funding mechanism that starts to take place. The

City of Cleveland had a taxing or financing district that helps pay for the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. In fact, it has been so successful that it has so much money that it doesn't know what to do with. It has been overly successful. If people in Cleveland find out, that money won't be sitting in a surplus fund. The entity has the ability to contract out. It is not responsible to sweep it. It contracts out. It can contract out with the city or a private entity. It is responsible for security. They could have an agreement with the police department or with a private company. It has flexibility. It is important, obviously, that is has public oversight and then you create a Board or some type of combined Board that has public and private sector members that have the responsibility for oversight, but this entity is a facilitator, it is the cheerleader, it is the person who makes things happen. When you go and see a loose brick on the riverfront or you see plants dying, you know who to call and they are there right away. Internally, it coordinates it. I think it also has design review responsibility and it serves as a clearinghouse to make sure that everything is done. It does the fundraising. I think what is important is how we see the fundraising happening on this. Initially, frankly there isn't a dedicated revenue source that exists now and looking on Page 4, initially it is a combination of City funds and grants which we have just applied for and future EDA grants which we are looking for that we can get the grant money to make things happen. Eventually, you really want to evolve to some type of dedicated funding source. The special improvement districts such as you have downtown now with its taxing district could be the entity. It could be a sub-entity that has a special taxing district. More and more business improvement districts or special service districts a la New Hampshire are the way it is done. Tax increment financing where we have evaluated previously the additional taxes that might be generated from the additional development. You allocate all or a portion of those taxes to the development and it creates a revenue stream. You could do that legally by creating a tax increment financing district such as Concord has done or you could do it administratively, saying okay what are the accounts this year and what are the monies and we will put the monies available. Finally, it is programming from various elements. If you owned land and there was development of housing or development of retail, you would get land use revenues and you would dedicate those to the operation. If there were rentals for having a festival on the riverfront, you would dedicate those. If there were various fees for operations. If there were cost sharing in terms of say the arcade, who pays for the arcade, well that is something that has to be negotiated but in other areas it can be cost sharing. It can be cost sharing in terms of capital costs and it could be cost sharing in terms of operations. You could have reciprocal lease arrangements and various things so there is lots of flexibility and other things in terms of the funding that could be done but it is important to get it started, have a dedicated entity, make sure that is funding and we know we can't do multi-year funding so it means multi-year funding subject to appropriation. We would like to think this is a very essential function so we don't have to worry about the annual appropriations initially. You

mentioned creation of endowments. Those are often things that can be done to make things happen. You can look at some of the examples in Peoria, which I know most of you visited, or other communities, which can apply here. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Chairman O'Neil asked, Mr. MacKenzie, the bond although it is somewhat general and allows…it says "riverfront development construction and improvements to parking areas; planning and design for future parking improvements, upgrades to certain pedestrian areas, the Riverwalk and miscellaneous improvements." We could take, as we have been talking about with Parks and some of our buildings and such, a small portion of that, for lack of a better term, development costs, is that correct?

Mr. MacKenzie answered yes; development related costs.

Chairman O'Neil asked we couldn't, for instance, if somebody came and said we want to do the baseball field, we couldn't use part of the bond money to have somebody sit down with them because that is not what the bond is all about, correct.

Mr. MacKenzie answered the bond could be expanded in scope. We would probably want to go to the full Board and clarify the language so that everybody understood where we were coming from. The bond was intended primarily for the Riverwalk, but there are related costs directly adjacent to it, even connections to Elm Street.

Chairman O'Neil asked so that could be expanded even this year. We wouldn't have to wait until next year to do that.

Mr. MacKenzie answered I will work on that.

Alderman Klock moved to direct the City Solicitor's Office, the Planning Director and the Finance Officer to come up with a game plan for managing the Riverwalk. Alderman Thibault duly seconded the motion. Chairman O'Neil called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Chairman O'Neil asked, Mr. MacKenzie, could you report back as soon as you have something.

Mr. MacKenzie answered yes.

Some discussion took place among the Aldermen that they don't want this function to be put on a City department.

Alderman Sysyn asked is the Millyard part of the tax thing like Elm Street is.

Mr. MacKenzie answered yes, it is.

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

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee