

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC HEARING – ZONING ORDINANCE)
November 17, 2025 at 6:00 PM**

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

The Mayor called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Long.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Morgan, Goonan, Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, Kantor, O'Neil, Levasseur, E. Sapienza, Burkush, Barry, Vincent

Absent: Terrio, Thomas

The Mayor advised that the purpose of the public hearing is for the proposed Zoning Ordinance for the City of Manchester; that anyone wishing to speak must first step to the nearest microphone when recognized and give his/her name and address in a clear, loud voice for the record; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; and any questions must be directed to the Chair.

The Mayor requested that the Director of Planning and Community Development make a presentation.

Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director: I think you all know Kristen Bixby, but just in case, Kristen is a Senior Planner with the Planning and Community Development Department. She has been the project manager on this proposed zoning rewrite. Kristen and I are here tonight to answer any questions that might come up during the course of this public hearing. But of course, we understand that the purpose of a public hearing is to hear from the public. So, I'm going to make my introductory remarks fairly brief. And then, unless there are any preliminary questions from the board, Kristen

and I will step aside and allow the folks who came here tonight to speak. So, the primary thing that I want to do at this point is put this public hearing in context. Public hearings like this one are required by state law. Any time that a municipality amends a zoning ordinance, there has to be notice to the public that's posted ten days prior to the hearing. And people have to be allowed to testify. And that's really all the public engagement that state law requires prior to a vote on the amendment of a zoning ordinance. But of course, as you all know, there has been far more public process that has led us to this point. Tonight's public hearing is the culmination of a multi-year public process that really began in 2019 with the start of the writing of the city's master plan. And while that was a public process with more than 500 people participating, it was really just a warm up when compared with the public engagement of the zoning ordinance. When the first draft of the rewritten zoning ordinance was published in June of 2024, the mayor's office and the Planning and Community Development Department began the most extensive process of public engagement that the city has ever conducted for a zoning ordinance. The letter that I submitted with tonight's agenda goes into detail on this, but for now, I'll just hit a few highlights. After the first draft of the zoning ordinance became available in June of 2024, a letter signed by Mayor Ruais was mailed to every household in Manchester. That letter made people aware that the city was proposing to rewrite the zoning ordinance, and it invited people to attend any of 12 community meetings that would be held throughout the city and to take a survey about zoning and land use. As you know, we partnered with the University of New Hampshire to conduct the meetings and the survey, and all of us were pleasantly surprised with how much the people of Manchester participated. About a thousand people attended the community meetings, and about 1,500 people took the survey at the end of the summer, when the meetings and the survey were done. UNH wrote reports that summarized all of the comments that they collected from participants. The Planning staff used those reports as the basis for writing a second draft of the proposed zoning ordinance, and we made thousands of edits. Hardly a page of the first draft was left untouched, and our guiding principle for making edits was always trying to understand what the people of Manchester told us they wanted, and incorporating that into the ordinance, and to help ensure that we were being consistent with what the people of Manchester wanted. We made those edits in close coordination with a steering committee that was comprised of ten Manchester citizens who were selected from the

membership of city boards and by Mayor Ruais. And as all of you know, the Planning staff also met with the members of this board. Prior to completing the second draft, we discussed the comments that your constituents made during the public engagement and how those comments were reflected in the second draft of the proposed ordinance. The second draft was published on August 8th of this year, and that began a period of about 60 days of public comment. We took out advertisements in both the Union Leader and Manchester Ink link to notify people that the second draft was published, and to tell people how they could comment on it. We received thoughtful comments during that period, both from citizens and from professionals who work in development in Manchester, and we made further edits to the document as a result. And after completing those additional edits, we submitted the proposed zoning ordinance to the board last month. So, everything that I just described about how we solicited public opinion, including the letter and the meetings and the survey and the multiple drafts and the steering committee and the 60-day comment period, all of that was extra. Those were steps that we took, not because they were required by state law, but because we wanted to understand what the people of Manchester wanted for the future of their city, and to translate that into the language of a zoning ordinance. And that has been our goal all along with this document. So, after all of that, what did the people of Manchester tell us they wanted? Well, the second draft of this ordinance was published on August 8th, and I gave a presentation on that same day that went for nearly two hours, that described what the people of Manchester told us and how the proposed zoning ordinance reflected what they said. For anyone who is interested, a recording of that presentation is linked in the letter that I submitted with your agenda. But to boil it all down, the people of Manchester told us that they believe the cost of housing in Manchester is too high, and that more housing and more variety of housing should be constructed to bring costs down and provide people with places to live. They also told us that they care about preserving historic and natural resources. They told us that they care about design standards so that if a building is built new in a neighborhood, it will fit in. They told us that they care about walkability and having places to walk to, which is why they also told us that they were in favor of more mixed use neighborhoods in some places. They told us that they wanted the permitting process to be streamlined. And last but not least, they told us that they wanted to improve the effectiveness of code enforcement so that there would be better ways to deal with problem

properties. The rewritten zoning ordinance that we have submitted to you attempts to address these concerns. It is not a panacea, and it's not going to fix everything overnight. A zoning ordinance cannot do that, but it can help shape the future of the city in a way that the people of Manchester want it to. In my opinion, the most important thing that this proposed zoning ordinance does is it brings the city's land use regulations up to date. The current zoning ordinance is 24 years old. It's been a long time since we took stock of what the people of Manchester want for the future of their city, but now we have and we know what people want, and we have tried to deliver it to them with this proposed rewrite of the zoning ordinance. So that concludes what I wanted to say. And now Kristen and I would be happy to step aside so that members of the public can speak unless the board has any preliminary questions for us.

The Mayor called for those wishing to speak.

Bill Smillie, 8 Laurmand Way: I did speak to the Board about a month ago and I'll just keep this short and sweet as possible. I have prepared packages for all the aldermen, including the city clerk, and including Jeff and his team. If that's okay, I'll submit those packages. I didn't want to do it by email because there's photocopies in there and different types of studies. If we're a forward-thinking city, there's a lot of good information on there about being a forward-thinking city. So, I hope you enjoy it and read through it. And I appreciate the time. So again, I want to thank Jeff and his team. I didn't get involved in the process until September. But he did meet with myself and Alderman O'Neil. Alderman Burkush and Alderman Levasseur and I have had communications. I got Mr. Barry when he was on vacation, so at least he answered my call. I didn't mean to interrupt your vacation. So sorry about that. But the willingness to meet with us back in September, not only us, it's the professionals. I've been in the signage industry for 40 years. I've been an active member of the International Sign Association, and I've worked with hundreds of communities across the United States, including Manchester. In 2009, when I appeared before this board, when they were going to make a drastic change to sign code, I got involved in that. So, I've been involved in this industry for a while. I do have a passion, but this isn't really a sales pitch about the future. It's really about our city. Jeff and his team's willingness to make changes, accept information from the professionals. We made

some valuable information to his team with regards to lighting, how to regulate lighting with regards to digital signage which at first was met with some resistance, but then was opened up to and it was incorporated in the new language. So, I do appreciate that and some other changes. This isn't a tit for tat. I appreciate their willingness to work with the professionals. Maybe that invite should have been invited earlier on in the game. I'm a resident and have been a taxpayer of this city for the 64 years I've been alive, so I understand what the people want. So again, I expressed my concerns to the board last time. I just want to keep it brief. The presentation that was done to the public with regards to my industry, which was signage, there were two particular slides on there that were unfavorable and untrue. So, I just want to bring that to the record again. Those slides are in that package. This isn't a tit for tat. It really was kind of the basis on a lot of information, what the people wanted. So, I just ask you to look at those slides because that's not a representation of our industry at all. Good, bad and the ugly. There are obviously ugly signs out there. I wish my neighbors would cut their grass more often and keep it greener, but that's not the case. So unfortunately, we don't regulate that, do we? No. So technology, I'm just going to talk really quick about technology and signage and where are we going. What our downtowns want, downtowns compete with shopping centers and malls and commercial areas. And what do they have? They have lighting, they have safety, and they have good signage. So, downtowns across the country have been struggling with this whole revitalization process for years. And we're not alone. Some of them have moved forward. Some of them have failed miserably. We don't need to look very far right over the border, the Lawrence's and the Brockton's and the Lowell's, where they took a different approach and they went to a more conservative downtown area, low lighting, not bright, and they didn't bring in new business. It wasn't vibrant. The one thing about those communities is they don't have a major arena downtown, which I was part of that whole process in the city, which was a phenomenal win for the city. They don't have a baseball park downtown that draws in thousands of people a day. They don't have a major airport north of Boston. They didn't redo their entire millyard and restructure it. So, we have a lot going for us in the City of Manchester. And I just I just want to reiterate my concerns. A lot of it's addressed in there about the shift to look at signage and look at lighting in particular and signage in particular, as something that we need to look at and we need to shape it in a certain way. So, I'm going to close with this. So, in that package,

you'll see all types of information. Some studies from the Small Business Association, because we have to remember, yes, it is about what the citizens want, but there's a huge revenue and tax base that comes from the businesses in downtown Manchester and all over the city. So, my original thought was to have the second section pulled out. I still believe that should be done. And I was told that maybe the board would work with us later on. But I'm open to that. I hope the board and the people of the city take a look at the package and the information I provided. Again, I want to thank Mr. Belanger and his team for their openness to meet with us.

Paul Vigneault, 194 McCarthy Street: I've been here for my whole life. Anyways, this was just about hoping there's green space around that Sununu Center. I know it's mixed use. I think that's a great idea. But I'd love some green space around that thing. I happen to be an abutter, so that's selfish on my part. That's really all I have; I'm probably in the wrong meeting.

Bryce Kaw-uh, 639 N. Bay Street: I wanted to speak, as everyone else does, about the new zoning ordinance. So, this new proposed zoning ordinance before you tonight is the culmination of years of hard work. Hard work from city staff, from elected officials, from commissioners, from board members and from volunteers. Thousands of residents have had a hand in crafting this new zoning code as well, through a dozen ward focused community engagement meetings and through a survey sent to every household in the city. It has taken us a while to get to this point, and now it's time to take the next step and officially approve these changes. But why do all this in the first place? Put simply, reforming our land use regulations and cutting unnecessary red tape will help us address the ongoing housing crisis. It won't be a silver bullet, but it's an essential piece of the puzzle. It's also a common-sense effort that crosses partisan boundaries. The zoning rewrite began under Democratic Mayor Joyce Craig. It has continued under Republican Mayor Jay Ruais, and hopefully it will be passed in a bipartisan fashion by a Board of Aldermen that is split evenly 7 to 7. While the new zoning ordinance isn't perfect, it's a hell of a lot better than what we have today. It will make it easier to build the housing we need. It will support economic development, and it will help make Manchester an example for the rest of the state to follow. So, for the future of our city and its people, I urge you to

vote yes on the new zoning ordinance and I plan to end my remarks there, though I did want to add one more thing. So, I respect the gentleman who spoke first tonight, and I understand his concern with the signage regulations. I also appreciate his courage to speak up in a public setting such as this. That being said, I do strongly support the new signage ordinance as written. Visual appeal is very important to a city, and I'd rather not lean too much into the Vegas part of Manch-Vegas.

Carol Veenstra, 669 Union Street: I represent the Unitarian Universalist Church at 669 Union Street. We as a church, we are interested in this ordinance because it makes it easier to build ADUs and it lets the elderly age in place. And of course, that is an issue for our church. For anybody. It's a city issue. And for us, it's a moral issue as well. We believe that it gives people the option of having multi-generational households. We don't need to emphasize or repeat that. The rising cost of care, especially in care and facilities or even non-home-based supportive housing, is going to be almost unacceptable to many of our parishioners. And we also want to share with you that we have learned in our church that a multigenerational household improves the health and extends the lifespan of the people in it, especially the elderly. And I'm elderly. And so, I also have a personal interest in this. Multigenerational households are holistic in nature. And the good news is that nobody knows you as well as your family. And the bad news is, is that nobody knows you as well as your family. But anyway, I want to thank you for your time and have a good night. I don't know if I can say bless you, but bless you from our church.

Kenneth Keller, 8 Memorial Drive: I actually did not expect to speak today, but I wanted to just bring something up. We're actually celebrating our one-year anniversary in our house on Saturday. So, I was not part of this process prior to this. We moved from Rochester and absolutely love our new home. It's been great. And we love Manchester. It's been wonderful. Some other research brought me to the zoning issues that are going on and actually I read through everything over the weekend. And one of the things that struck me just from my own personal thing first of all, the effort that's gone into this whole plan has been great. I love to see the community being brought in and thought about it. As you can tell, I'm not a public speaker. I'm a bit nervous. But the one thing that really did stick out to me and is a personal thing is there was a few additions that strictly related

to automotive work on cars. I'm a hobbyist and really do a lot of work, and I saw that those additional things had been added into the zoning and looking through everything, I wasn't sure what had caused that. I actually signed the paper just because I thought it was a sign in and I did not expect to speak. So, I figured I'd just come up and voice that concern. And again, I really wasn't sure why that had been added in, in addition to everything else.

Jyoma Tamang, 216 Karatzas Ave: I'm here for you to pass the zoning rewrite. I grew up in Manchester in ward six. I went to Hillside, and I have my friends and community here. I have deep love for what this place is. My uncle owns a kitchen here. I've been part of multiple services here and different jobs, so I understand the importance of this Manchester community. I also understand why I also need my friends and family here, and why I also need to be able to afford to stay here. And despite all of that, despite my love for Manchester, I was priced out. I had to leave this very same community that I wanted to be a part of, that I had so much root connections and love to. I'm a young professional with stable income and I work really hard for what I do, but I still got priced out and Manchester has so much potential for what it could be and how it could be thriving for young professionals like me, because I want to be a part of this community and I don't want to be disengaged. This is where I come for my home. This is where my parents live. And with this new zoning rewrite for Manchester to continue to be the greatest city and the potential that it could have, I would make sure that this rewrite is a vote for the future, and maybe one day I can move back where there will be multiple ADUs, multiple selections, and opportunities for young people like me to come back. Because I know a couple of my friends that are also struggling to find a place to live here. So with that, I hope that you can say yes to this rewrite. And please vote yes.

Joede Brown, Cartier Street: I am the current chairperson of the Manchester Housing Commission. The Manchester Housing Commission supports the proposed Land Use Code update. The Planning and Community Development Department undertook an extensive engagement process of how land is used across the city through surveys, public meetings and community feedback, and enabled everyone to learn about our community members priorities and visions for Manchester's future and the work of the Zoning Ordinance Steering Committee. To incorporate that feedback from residents and

businesses demonstrates a thoughtful, collaborative approach to modernizing land use planning in Manchester. There are things that we we would have liked to have seen more of to promote housing options in this draft, but it's the balance of the wants, the needs and the desires across our community that makes this draft a step forward. And then as the city continues to revise and implement zoning policy, we encourage a focus on future amendments that directly address this need. We believe this update has the potential to strengthen families, support seniors, revitalize our commercial corridors, and help ensure Manchester remains a stable, prosperous and welcoming community. We encourage the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to pass the revised second draft of the proposed Manchester Zoning Ordinance. Sincerely, the Manchester Housing Commission. Thank you.

Jackson Robidoux, 75 Head Street: I am a Southern New Hampshire University student. I work two part time jobs, one being with the Granite State Organizing Project and the other being the Youth Success Project. I'm a person that cannot afford to live on campus, and I pay my way through my program. There isn't affordable housing in Manchester. Two weeks ago, I went on roommates.com, and the cheapest room I could find in Manchester was \$750 with nothing included. This zoning change will increase the inventory of homes in our city, which will lower the cost of apartments available on the market. This will make it easier for people like me to be able to afford housing. Any housing is good housing.

James Vayo, 427 Holly Ave: I am both a resident and I work here in the city, and I want to tell a little story about myself. Back in 2008, during the Great Recession, I had a one year old daughter. I was just out of college, and I was trying to get started in my career. And unfortunately, I lost my job. And for a lot of time, over a year, I tried to scrounge together the money to pay my rent and eventually had to move back in with my parents in order to support myself. And that experience profoundly affected me and gave me a great empathy towards the housing issue in society at large, and I've spent the rest of my life really dedicated to trying to find housing solutions for our communities here in New Hampshire. That includes time working in the city of Manchester, doing a large-scale real estate development, then working for the mayor's office in Nashua and then eventually

coming to work here in Manchester and live here in Manchester, which I deeply love. One of the things I do now is I put together form-based codes for municipalities in the New York, Long Island, Hudson River region. And so, I have a lot of experience reviewing codes. And I'd just like to say that this code is very well written. It's a high-quality product. Its structure and concepts are well founded, and I think you should be deeply supportive of it. With all that said, I do have a couple critiques and it really revolves around the city as it exists today. So, there are lots of places in the city where the existing level of density, i.e., the housing that's built, exceeds what is proposed in the zoning. And that's slightly problematic, because what it means is that those neighborhoods can't see any new investment because the lot size or the amount of development that they could do in those neighborhoods would be lower than the land value. And so, from a real estate development perspective, nothing happens. And so, I would say take a close look at the way the zoning is structured, especially around any of the missing middle housing. So that's everything from a duplex to a small multifamily. Structure that better so that it can be more feasible. And in particular, there's a section letter D in each of the housing typologies that says that you need an additional X square foot for every additional unit in the building. And I would say that that's not necessary at all. There are enough other controls in the form-based code that you don't actually need to require arbitrarily additional land area for each additional unit in a multifamily building. The other thing is the state passed a law saying that municipalities aren't allowed to require more than one parking space per unit. But if you look at the layout and diagrams and the math of each of the building types, it works out that you really have to have enough land to park two cars on each site. So effectively the city is mandating two cars without saying they are requiring two cars. And I would say, if possible, revise the zoning to reflect a one car maximum requirement.

Andrew Horn, Amherst: I live in Amherst, and I'm here to speak in support of the zoning overhaul. What you decide here in our state's largest city hits my wallet. Manchester anchors New Hampshire's housing market, and we can't build enough homes here. Rents and prices rise in Amherst, Nashua, and across the state. I'm a stakeholder because my rent reflects your housing supply. Right now, our code bans many naturally affordable homes, duplexes, triples, small apartments, rooming and boarding houses, and backyard

cottages, while reserving most land for the most expensive form single family only. That's how you get an 8500-home shortage and rising homelessness. Updating the zoning to allow more homes for different sizes in more places reduces rent pressure and gives outreach teams real options, keys in hand, not just waitlists. Housing people is how we end encampments. Please pass a housing friendly code that legalizes duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, small apartment buildings, and ADUs citywide, explicitly allows well-regulated boarding and rooming houses, streamlines approvals for projects that add units, especially near jobs and transit, and keeps sensible design standards without using them to block homes. More homes in Manchester means lower rents in Amherst and everywhere else, and fewer neighbors sleeping outside. Let's choose an abundant, welcoming future.

Alderman Fajardo: Thank you. I just wanted to start with a comment, which is a huge thank you. Having been part of the steering committee I've seen firsthand over the last many year or more your hard work and especially you, Kristen, as a project lead putting in, I mean, so, so many hours and so much detail and so much thought and really, really leading the steering commission through a really thoughtful process. So thank you. And thanks to the whole team. I did have a question, I suppose regarding the the feedback that we have received, and I've actually also received a couple of communications from people with very specific questions or concerns. And I'm wondering how you might propose that we keep this document dynamic. We know that it this is the first update that it's seen in 24 years. So how do we avoid being in a situation where this thing becomes stagnant and outdated? Has your team given thought to how we'll keep it up to date?

J. Belanger: Absolutely. Yeah. And Kristen, feel free to jump in. But I'll just say preliminarily just as a point of clarification, there have been updates to the current zoning ordinance along the way. Little, little targeted things here and there. This is the first total, you know, holistic rewrite in 24 years. And as you said, a lot goes into that. And so those don't happen often. It's a chance to really think about the whole document as one thing. But there is always the opportunity to amend a zoning ordinance. It's a living document. Unlike a master plan, which is kind of a snapshot in time, we absolutely would be open to amending at any point. So, you know, we heard from a gentleman tonight who is

interested in maybe us looking harder at science and seeing what we can do to accommodate more of his comments. We'd be happy to do that and look more into that. We heard from a gentleman tonight interested in having us look a little bit closer at some fairly recent language we put in about automobile repair in a residential setting. That's something that we worked with an alderman with, with a constituent with. We came up with the language that we have, but that could easily be tweaked and improved to make sure that we understand the needs of both sides of that issue. Land use is like this, where you can get two very legitimate, but different points of view on any issue. Auto repair is just one of them. Signs are another. And so, you know, as as those ideas fluctuate, we can respond with this ordinance. So we can always come back to this board with an amendment. And I would expect in the next year or two, we probably would. We'd say, hey, we've been administering this thing for a little while now, and we just noticed we want to make some improvements here and there. I think there's a very good chance we would do that.

Alderman Fajardo: I was curious what your team will be doing to just keep an eye on how it ages. And for example, I know you did a ton of public engagement leading up to this moment. Will there be opportunities for spot engagement along the way, something to that effect?

J. Belanger: Yes. Signage is a good example. We could re-engage with the University of New Hampshire, do another survey targeted to signs. We didn't want to overwhelm the public with a 200-question survey. So, we had to kind of just hit certain topics with a couple of questions. We could dig into one and make changes to the ordinance as a result. So certainly, we could do that.

Alderman Fajardo: I'm not going to miss carrying around that giant heap of paper.

J. Belanger: Fair enough, but thank you for serving on the committee.

Alderman T. Sapienza: Most of the people that I spoke to about this wanted to talk about parking. Can you give us a little summary of the changes to the parking requirements?

J. Belanger: Sure. First off, we heard that loud and clear. That was very clear in the survey, in the community meetings, people are concerned about parking. We asked questions specifically about parking and about if people had to choose between adding more housing or more businesses or more parking on a lot on the dimensions of a lot, which would they favor? People tended to say parking. These were close. I mean, it was 60/40; they weren't wildly apart. But people care very much about ensuring that there is enough parking when a new business or a new home shows up. So, we respect that. And we made sure that the new zoning ordinance reflected that. Between the first draft and the second draft, we probably talked about parking more than any other issue. We spent a lot of time on that. And we worked on ways to find out how we could tweak the existing ordinance to put in new language in the new ordinance that would allow people to find ways to fit more cars onto their lots. So let me give you an example. Within the last year, we had a gentleman come to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. He had a house that had been in his family for a couple of generations. It had been his grandparents' house. He moved in and he wanted to repair the driveway and fit two cars on that driveway. Small house, small lot, tight driveway. He had to go to the Zoning Board of Adjustment because the driveway did not have enough room for the two cars to fit on there and have four feet off of his structure, which he had to have under the current ordinance four feet off of his property line, which he had to have under the current ordinance. The current ordinance prohibits two parking spaces being in the front yard. So, he hired a law firm. He went to the Zoning Board of Adjustment. It was a fair amount of a process. With the new Zoning Ordinance, none of that would have to happen. We eliminated those restrictions so that that gentleman today, were that zoning ordinance in effect, when he came to the Planning Department, he would pull a building permit and that would be it. So, we have found ways to allow for regular homeowners to fit more cars on their lot in a legal way and get them off the street. So, I think that also illustrates one of our goals of wanting to streamline permitting when someone doesn't have to go to the Zoning Board of Adjustment, spend the time, spend the money. That's a great reduction of red tape. So, we have thought a lot about that.

Alderman T. Sapienza: Thank you. And I appreciate all the work that went into this by everyone in your department.

Alderman O'Neil: I too want to thank the commission for their efforts. I want to especially thank Kristen and Jeff for taking the time to meet with me. We spent almost two hours, I think, going over this. Alderman Burkush and I met with Kristen and Jeff, and it was a very good discussion. We didn't reach an agreement on downtown, but reached an agreement about some other parts of the city, I think, which was good. Jeff even had me working; I was out measuring some signs at one point. Only kidding. I offered to do that for him, but to the credit of Jeff and Kristen and the team, they listen to the community and they sought feedback. And Jeff just said something that's important. He didn't say this was a perfect document, that there's going to be a need to revise at some point. And I think that's important, but I want to thank them for their efforts because this is pretty special. And I think if we had a consultant, we never would have got the deliverable we did get. It's a well-done effort.

Alderman Long: The automotive work the gentleman spoke about. He's a hobbyist doing automotive. This is not going to affect him.

J. Belanger: It depends.

Alderman Long: He's not cutting his frame, welding his frame, sanding his frame. And it all depends where he lives. If he's living in the inner city, that's problematic because you got close neighbors that are listening to all this and what have you, but the intent isn't to not allow that. Do any of these zoning changes that allow for two cars, that you have to have two cards?

Kristen Bixby, Senior Planner: So, the state actually has amended that municipalities cannot require more than one parking space per dwelling unit, and that is reflected in the new ordinance.

Alderman Long: So, there is no new ordinance that you have to have two parking spots.

Alderman E. Sapienza: Thanks for the presentation. I wanted to ask you, have you heard over the past few years comments from developers that they would like to build single family homes in Manchester, but with the current ordinance, it's very difficult to do?

J. Belanger: No, I don't think so. I think people are able to build single family homes in Manchester today when they meet the regulations. But, you know, the fact is that most of the easy land to build on in Manchester has been built on. And so, you've got land with wetlands, you've got other obstacles and it can be difficult, but people can build single family homes in Manchester today.

Alderman E. Sapienza: Alright. Thank you very much.

Alderman Kantor: Yes. Thank you. I just want to say thank you very much for hearing ward six, because they came out really strong last year about their concerns on Hanover Street and Candia Road. And even though it was going to become full blown South Willow Street, you heard them. So, I appreciate that we're going to stay very neighborly in ward six.

Alderman Levasseur: What are the first influxes you see when this passes? So, let's assume January, everybody wants to come out and they want to start planning for spring. What do you think the first big rush is going to be? Is it going to be to take their two families, make them into fours? What do you expect? Because you are making major changes for the purposes of making a better city. Obviously concerns about parking and of course, the biggest concerns that we hear every single meeting is basically affordable housing. Whether we use the word affordable, more housing, what's going to be the first big thing you're going to see when you open your office on January 2nd?

J. Belanger: Just point of clarification, this ordinance would become effective March 1st. So, we're leaving a fair amount of lead time.

Alderman Levasseur: On March 2, what do you expect is going to happen? What do you think the big thing is that everyone's going to want to come? A lot of people may say I obviously like the idea of getting an extra parking spot on my own property, right? I don't know if I have to come and get a permit for that, or I'm allowed to do it without it.

J. Belanger: It is hard to predict. In 2017, the State of New Hampshire's legislature passed a law that said that no municipality that has a single-family district can prohibit accessory dwelling units. Any across the state, anyone who has a single-family district, you could put an ADU on your property. And there was prediction that, oh, this is going to change every single-family district and everyone's going to have ADUs everywhere. How many ADUs are on single family properties in Manchester? Half a percent, 1%, a very small amount.

Alderman Levasseur: I remember when I was on the Planning Board with you, I thought the same thing. We're going to get lined up with all these applications. It hasn't happened yet. Maybe it's another generation or maybe ten years away, but it'll pop. So that's a good example. I mean, you think that it's going to be something, but you're not really sure.

J. Belanger: It's tough to know. What I can say is, we mapped out where we expect there to be a difference in the regulatory ceiling between what is allowed today and what would be allowed under the new ordinance. And the first caveat there is that the Zoning Board of Adjustment hears, on average, about 150 cases a year. Each case might be numerous variances within it. And so, the current zoning ordinance is not being followed strictly right now. There are variances granted all the time. So, you can't do a comparison 1 to 1 that the new one is fluctuating all the time with every ZBA case. But when we mapped out where the differences were, about 80% of the city does not have significantly more development potential as a result of the zoning ordinance, because you think about all the single family districts, that's about 45% of the land area of the city. There's really very little difference between what the current zoning ordinance allows and what the proposed zoning ordinance allows. A little bit smaller lot sizes so people can maybe fit a little more on their lot. Maybe if you got a 20-acre parcel, you could squeeze a couple more houses in there, but it's not a dramatic change. The R-2 district is about 5% of the city. That's not

really changing much. The industrial district is about 7.5%. That's not changing much. The RSM, which would become the RM, that's 7.5%. That's not changing much. The conservation district is about 10% of the city. That's not changing at all. So that gets you up to just about 75%. And then you've got a couple little places here and there that fill in another 5%. You get up to 80% of the land area of the city pretty quickly. That really doesn't have that much of a noticeable jump in the ceiling of development potential. So where is the remaining 20%? It's mostly toward the downtown. It's mostly in the areas around the downtown. And it's kind of one-off larger parcels like the Hackett Hill property. That's going from no residential at all to now allowing residential. And the board has already made a deal with a developer to build on some residential on that property. So that's where we expect it. I think Hackett Hill is going to happen pretty quickly.

Alderman Levasseur: This is a little bit of a tough question to answer. And it's in the scope of it. But where does grandfathering current things that we have already built, businesses that have already been established for years and they want to transfer ownerships to other people or other business businesses. Where do we stand on grandfathering and do new owners have to expect massive amounts of different changes that they're going to have to upgrade to?

J. Belanger: So, grandfathering is a constitutional issue. It's a state law issue. It is above zoning. That is the law no matter what we do. And so, if someone has a business that for some reason is not allowed, say it's a corner store in a residential district and it's been there for a long time, that can continue no matter what we do with the zoning ordinance, if they change ownership but they keep the same business, that doesn't matter. Ownership grandfathering does not look at who owns the property. So that would stay the same if they change the type of business, say corner store to a barber shop. Under the current ordinance, almost always that would need to go to the zoning board to get a variance if it's not allowed. Kristen, maybe you want to jump in here about how we have we have changed things like for parking requirements, for instance, we've changed things to allow those transitions from the corner store to the barber shop to be easier so that people can do them without needing red tape such as review from a zoning board, for instance.

K. Bixby: Our principal use table has significantly shrunk from what's allowed now to what is proposed. And a big portion of that is we looked at things specifically for when we were designing the mixed-use districts for things that would be considered neighborhood scale service and retail uses. So right now, service uses could go on for two pages of slightly different types of service uses. And every time there's a different use, there's potential for a different parking calculation for that use as well. So, we would often find ourselves at the Planning Board having people come in for a difference of two parking spaces because they're going from a corner store to a barber shop, because that changes from a retail use to a service use. And we combined all of those uses, as long as they're capped at 3000ft² to keep things walkable and not overpower the neighborhoods they can go in. So, there's still a little bit of overview, but we're doing it in a way where they're all combined and they all have one parking calculation. So, by doing that change, that's usually the biggest thing that gets thrown off is people end up needing 1 or 2 more spaces for that switch, and that's hopefully going to go away.

Alderman Levasseur: Will the Zoning Board still maintain its power to overrule or change the ordinances? Where it doesn't allow a three story building, we're okay with putting a five story building. The ZBA still has that power, that final power. It's not a bunch of, you know, words and codes in a book. It still has oversight by the ZBA?

J. Belanger: Absolutely. Variances are constitutionally required. So, we're not getting around that. But the the hope is that this is a new update to what the zoning regulations are. It's a recent assessment of what the people of Manchester want. And so, the hope is that the Zoning Board of Adjustment would say we now have a pretty fresh up to date look at what people want. So maybe we don't grant the variances we used to grant because we know this is what the people want.

Alderman Levasseur: Because it's updated, but they still have that ability to do that.

K. Bixby: Absolutely.

Mayor Ruais: I just want to add my call of thanks to both of you. To me, if there's an example of where government works well, it's what you both have produced over the last year and a half, just incredibly open and transparent with the public and making sure we're getting feedback. I know you were doing one on one meetings with the aldermen over the summer. I think what you all have put together as a product is something that we can all be proud of. So just to add my thanks to everybody. All those wishing to speak have been heard. The testimony presented will be taken under advisement.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Burkush**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

City Clerk

*Meeting Start Time: 6:00PM
Meeting End Time: 6:52PM
Minutes Prepared By: Michael Intranuovo*