

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC HEARING – TAX RELIEF INCENTIVE APPLICATION)
September 28, 2021 at 6:00 PM**

Mayor Craig called the meeting to order.

Mayor Craig called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Cavanaugh, Stewart, Long, Roy, Sharonov, O'Neil, Levasseur,
E. Sapienza, Shaw, Barry, Gamache, Hirschmann

Absent: Aldermen T. Sapienza and Terrio

Mayor Craig advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to hear those wishing to speak on a Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive Application pursuant to RSA 79-E for property located at 1211-1217 Elm Street (Map 41, Lots 7 & 8) in 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.

Mayor Craig requested that Robert Gagne, Assessor, make a presentation.

Robert Gagne, Assessor, stated my office was asked to review this application since the MEDO office has been vacant. I will tell you that the owner and developer is here and can also describe this project. My job was to review the application to see if it met the requirements for 79-E and it does. If you have the document in front of you, I would like to point out a couple of highlights. It is the Lemay building and the Raxx building just above Bridge Street. Most people should be familiar with that. It is a property that is underutilized and is in need of attention. It does fall within the district and qualifies for 79-E which would be the Central Business Service District. The amount of renovations proposed meet the threshold for the amount of investment and it does provide a public benefit as defined in the statute. All of this is in my letter to the Board. The initial request was for a seven-year relief period. The ordinance doesn't allow for that. It only

allows for a maximum of five years. I believe that the owner and developer have sent a follow-up letter that they are changing their request to five years versus seven years so this is something that the Board could approve. If you have questions beyond what I have said and what is in my letter, the owner and developer are here to address those issues or I can answer questions.

Alderman O'Neil asked can you define what a speakeasy is.

Mr. Gagne stated I would ask the owner to come up and answer that.

Robyn Alexander stated thank you for letting me speak. A speakeasy is actually honoring what was in the basement a long time ago before the fires in the 1940's. Apparently Mr. Lemay had a bar down there in the basement where he got together with his buddies and had a lot of fun. So we are putting in a bar/restaurant down there. It will be vintage 1920's. The servers who work there will be in vintage 1920's clothing. We will have four shuffleboard courts and three steel tipped dart alleys that have Plexiglas in between so people don't stab each other inadvertently. There will be a restaurant down there and I think it will be a lot of fun for the community to come and get together.

Alderman O'Neil asked ballpark how big is that area.

Ms. Alexander answered I believe the square footage is approximately 3,500 square feet. We are just fine-tuning it right now.

Alderman O'Neil asked and ballpark how many seats.

Ms. Alexander responded I can't answer that right now.

Alderman Hirschmann stated I read Assessor Gagne's letter to the Board and it does say seven years' term of covenant so that is going to be refined to five years correct.

Ms. Alexander replied we submitted a new application on 9/22/2021 for five years.

Alderman Hirschmann asked and the substantial rehabilitation is \$6,905,000 which is a lot of money. I remember this project four years ago. I remember the ownership group coming before us and talking about doing this project. It is taking a long time. In fact, in that four years we took a bus trip over there and closed off a street or did some adjustment to a street back there. When is this going to be substantially complete?

Ms. Alexander responded we are estimating at the very latest April 2023. The goal is October 2022. We did put it on hold briefly. I was still living in California at the time and I was closing out my business. Then I moved back here officially in November 2019 just in time for the pandemic to hit.

Alderman Hirschmann stated I only have two questions and I guess they would be for the staff that has brought this forward because we don't have an Economic Development Director. Are the taxes current on the property?

Mr. Gagne responded I can't answer that. I could have looked it up before the meeting but I didn't anticipate that question. I don't believe Brenda is here but I can follow-up and get you that information.

Alderman Hirschmann stated the only other question I have is if this is granted, the freeze on the tax isn't now but when the building is substantially complete right.

Mr. Gagne replied right. Once there is a CO issued and it is being used for its intended purpose that would be the first year and then it would be five tax years.

Alderman Hirschmann stated so if it takes the applicant five years to complete the project, there could be five more tax increases in that time.

Mr. Gagne stated it would freeze the effective tax burden at the current value. If there was a revaluation between now and completion, we would set the base higher which is

what I have done with the existing 79-E properties. It wasn't intended to insulate somebody from the effects of a revaluation. We would reset the base but not the increase in value because the improvements would not be captured until that five-year period.

Alderman Hirschmann asked did this property see a decrease during the revaluation.

Mr. Gagne answered it did not. I believe there was an increase. As far as the question regarding the taxes, it would only take me about 10 minutes to go down to the office and check that and come back if you want that answer.

Alderman Levasseur stated well we aren't voting on this tonight so we can have that information for the next meeting.

Alderman Shaw asked what is going to happen to Helen.

Ms. Alexander answered Helen is staying put. We are going to do what is known as an in-place renovation so once we get the configuration of what she wants...she goes on vacation a couple of times a year and when she goes we will make sure we do her renovation at the same time. She will be at the same quality as the rest of the building. We love Helen.

Mayor Craig stated just to let the Board know, the letter revising the request for five years is in your packet.

Ms. Alexander stated if for some reason the taxes are not up-to-date, they will be brought up-to-date immediately but I believe they are. I will check tomorrow morning.

Alderman Shaw stated just to clarify, Helen is my tailor.

Ms. Alexander stated Helen is everybody's tailor I think. I just want to say thank you very

much for all of your patience. I know it has been a rough couple of years for everybody. I am very committed to this project and I hope that we have an affirmative vote.

The Mayor called for those wishing to speak.

There was nobody present wishing to speak.

*This being a special meeting, no further business can be presented and on motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, 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