

A special meeting of the Board of Aldermen was held Tuesday, May 10, 2022, at 7:00 pm in the Aldermanic Chamber and via Zoom teleconference which meeting link can be found on the agenda and on the City's website calendar.

President Lori Wilshire presided; City Clerk Susan Lovering recorded.

Prayer was offered by City Clerk Susan Lovering; Alderman Patricia Klee led in the Pledge to the Flag.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. If you are participating via Zoom, please state your presence, reason for not attending the meeting in person, and whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know Law.

The roll call was taken with 10 members physically present and 2 members via Zoom of the Board of Aldermen present: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Sullivan, Alderman Klee, Alderman Moran, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Jette, Alderman Clemons (via Zoom), Alderwoman Kelly (via Zoom), Alderman Comeau (arrived at 7:27 p.m.), Alderman Dowd, Alderman Gouveia, Alderman Cathey (arrived at 7:05 p.m.), Alderman Thibeault, Alderman Wilshire.

Alderwoman Timmons was recorded absent.

PRESENTATION

- 14 Court Street

President Wilshire

Tonight is our presentation on 14 Court Street. I'm going to turn it over to Mayor Donchess.

Mayor Donchess

Well thank you very much Madam President. It may take more time than we have tonight to fully discuss the Court Street building, but it is an important building for the City both in terms of its historical context, the old Central Street Fire Station with some additions, as well as because of the role that it has played in the last several decades. The home for a number of our arts organizations, particularly in the performing arts and we have a group of people from some of those organizations here who would like to talk about the importance of the building to them. So I won't go on too long other than to say that the building has definitely been improved over the last few years. Three or four years ago, for example, the main fire bays were simply musty dead storage not being used at all. With your cooperation, we put out an RFP and a couple of the different RFP's and finally found Liquid Therapy, a local brewery, to occupy and improve that space. I think you can see a dramatic improvement there.

Also the fire suppression has been added to the portion of the building that did not have it before, including the Streeter Theater and the lower theater which has not been in use for at least a couple of decades. So that improved safety and enhanced the environment there.

And finally the roof was replaced and there is no more leaking. So that's a big improvement. Certainly there are additional changes that can be made and the costs and whether we should embark on those, or how, and how much that would cost is certainly a discussion we can have. I think the first order of business tonight is to alert you, or educate you, or remind you, the community, and the Board of Aldermen regarding the use that has been made of the building, particularly by our arts organization. I know they are here - Peacock Players, the Theater Guild, and others. So I would invite you to approach the podium and speak of your experience.

Chuck Emmons, Vice President, Actor Singers

My name is Chuck Emmons. I am currently Vice President of Actor Singers where our club house is on 219 Lake Street next to the Lake Street Fire Station. Actor Singers has been in existence, for those of you who are unfamiliar with, about 65 years. We started off in the Church of the Good Shepherd on Main Street. We do about five productions a year. Two main stage adult shows which perform in Keefe Auditorium and the three other productions down in Court Street.

Court Street is very meaningful to the organization because we have access to a space that is centrally located to the downtown Nashua area. It's got substantial amounts of parking and it's at a very reasonable cost. Theater is a very high expense occupation and it's very difficult to get any, what you might say profit, by the theater to recover our overhead for our Club House down on Lake Street. Probably our biggest money maker of the year is our junior or Children's Show which we perform down on Court Street. We have 35 to 50 kids involved and each kid brings along their parents. In

addition to the performance weekend, the kids also perform for their peers, their contemporaries, because we're able to bring in the local schools - Mount Pleasant most notably and also Birch Hill School out in Hollis. So we're able to - Mount Pleasant especially. They walk them down. They charge them a couple of bucks to see the show and then they walk them back to their lunch and they get an opportunity to see their peers actually out on stage performing and they also get to see a relatively good, fair production.

So for those of you who haven't seen the sign over Main Street, Actors Singers next show is Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. I have a few advertising cards here and some commemorative pens. I can stick them out for you if you'd like to take one. The pens actually work. They're pretty darn good. If anybody has any questions, feel free to reach me. I think Derek you have my email address and I look forward to hearing from you. Thanks. I appreciate your time.

Mayor Donchess

We have a little visual display for you.

Fred Daniels, Treasurer, Peacock Players Board of Directors

My name is Fred Daniels. I'm at 46 Chester Street here in Nashua. I am also the Treasurer of the Peacock Players Board of Directors. I'm also an alum parent of a Peacock performer who wishes to be here today but he is at work down in New York City.

But I want to do is give you some context of what Peacock has been to Court Street and what Court Street has been to Peacock Players. We are entering our 47th year at Court Street and during that time just to give you some general statistics, we've had over 250 main stage productions of plays, and musicals, and other theatrical performances. We also have an improv group. We also have a specialized musical singing group called "Spotlight" and they have performed over 60 times over the last 10 to 12 years.

We have also had a number of special performances especially with New Hampshire Symphony where we've combined the singing talents of our wonderful youth with the wonderful orchestral talents of Symphony New Hampshire.

The other thing that we do with most our plays, the ones that are appropriate, is that we offer the plays to the local schools in the Nashua area where they can come in on a special morning performance and we will provide that performance for them. We've had over 15,000 students in the Nashua schools, mostly in the elementary but also some of the middle schools, come to see our plays during their performance runs. In addition, we have had over 60, we believe somewhere in the neighborhood of 60,000 to 65,000 people come through Court Street Theater to see all these various performers from all over the region. So this just gives you some context.

The other thing that we're very proud of is we offer a summer theater camp. Many of the years we have offered it at Court Street Theater during the summer and we have had over 6,300 children come through that Theater Camp in the last 15 years. We've also been able to through grants, and through wonderful donations from the residents of this community have raised over \$100,000 which we have used for scholarships. Our goal is that any child who wants to perform, any child that wants to go to our Summer Theater Camp can go regardless of their financial situation. So we've been very proud to allow many, many children to come through or programs that may not have had the opportunity to see, and to hear, and to experience what we feel is just a wonderful situation related to education and enrichment.

So just to give you some idea of all the things we've been able to do at Court Street. Court Street is a unique setting for us because of the theater size which is about 260 seats when it's fully opened and that is just the perfect size for these types of performances allowing these young people, such as Grace and Molly, to be able to perform and to have wonderful, enriching experiences. So there really is no other place like this in the region that allows us to have not only the theater but also rehearsal rooms, class rooms, offices, a decent lobby - it could use a little rehab, public bathrooms that work. So it's just a really, really unique setting in a wonderful location and so we really think that this is some place that we would love to see continue. We feel that the partnership that you the City would have with Peacock Players, Actor Singers, NH Theater Guild, Symphony NH would allow us to be able to help contribute to not only to maintain the building but also to upcoming renovations through fund raising, through donations, through grants, and things of that nature. It's been a wonderful experience for these children and we want to see it continue. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Who's next? Anyone else going to speak?

Deanna Hoying, Executive Director of Symphony NH

Hi everyone. I'm Deanna Hoying. I'm the Executive Director of Symphony New Hampshire. We are New Hampshire's oldest professional orchestra and we will be celebrating our 100th anniversary in April of 2023. While our main performance space is Keefe, our offices are located at the Court Street address and it has been so impactful for us to be close to our friends. With Peacock Players, as I mentioned before, we have had a lot of great collaborations with them in the past. Having this kind of artistic sell there at Court Street is really conducive to partnerships that benefit an awful lot of people. And for us, of course, is also affordability. For us to be able to have our offices there at a very affordable rate with other arts groups and partners is just a boon to our bottom line. So we are so appreciative of the opportunity to be there with friends, and to have our offices there, and it's easily accessible to our patrons who want to come in and purchase tickets and talk with us about all things Symphony NH. So we very much appreciate being in this space and appreciate all of the efforts being made on behalf of Court Street. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Thank you.

Elle Millar, Executive Director, Peacock Players

Hello. My name is Elle Millar and as was announced today, I will be the new Executive Director for Peacock Players. I am very happy to introduce myself to you. Currently I am an 8th grade teacher at Pennichuck Middle School where I have taught for this is my seventh year there. I did my student teaching at Pennichuck. I did a long-term sub at Pennichuck. I am a Nashua teacher. So even as I move into a different role, I will still be a Nashua teacher. I will just have a very different classroom.

A lot of people today are talking about the history of Court Street Theater and I would love to just clue you into something that I'm very passionate about in bringing to Peacock Players and to Court Street Theater as I take on this position and that is to leverage its central location which as a middle school educator, I have to notice is within walking distance of two of our middle schools and within bus stop walking distance of all three of our middle schools. I have plans to leverage this fabulous location to bring in more students who would not necessarily have the funds, the means, the opportunity to pursue an arts education experience because of lack of transportation, access, funding, whatever the situation. We are in talks as the Board and myself have sort of talked about the future of Peacock, we want to push into the middle schools. We want to bring more opportunities to our kids. We want to push into the elementary schools as well.

Court Street is a key factor in our ability to do those things. The fact that we are so local to some of our poorest children is something that I am delighted that we have this central location. That we can be an accessible space for them. So while the past of Court Street Theater is fantastic and amazing, I am very interested in the future of Court Street and how that space can be used to bring more theater, more education, more arts to our kids. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Thank you. Is there anyone else that wants to speak about the Court Street? Come right up.

Stan Tremblay, Co-Owner Liquid Therapy

Howz it going everybody? For those who don't know me, I'm Stan Tremblay. My partner is Jason Palmer. He is currently on a Zoom call with us. We are co-owners of Liquid Therapy at 14B Court Street. A little bit about us, we're a beer manufacturer. We have 15 taps right now - 13 of which are my recipe made right in-house. We also serve food there, which we're actually looking to expand and part of the reason why Miss Kleiner came forward to help us move into that next section to move towards expansion and being this turnkey location that we're looking to build here in town. People have come from all over New England to get our nachos. If you haven't had our nachos, shame on you. It is regularly voted some of the best food around and it has made its way onto Facebook pages in Maine, and Connecticut, and during the pandemic people came from those locations because their government shut them down but we here in New Hampshire were allowed to have outdoor seating. It gave us quite the option.

We were just voted one of the top 16 breweries in New Hampshire on a Facebook page called "Southern NH Beer". They have a user run voting collective that all the breweries in our small state go up against each other in a bracket similar to like that of NCAA and we happened to beat out Schilling. That's something to be said. If you've had Schilling beer, you know it's good. You know it's some of the best in the northeast and potentially some of the best in America.

We were also voted the 2020 Great American Beer Bar from craftbeer.com. There are lots of beer bars in NH. We were voted the only one from craftbeer.com - little town Nashua.

We have a large following and honestly Court Street is a pretty ideal location for us. It gives us the opportunity to expand. Looking into that adjacent piece of the building, the old call center, which we now have all of our grain and other dry storage at. We're looking to expand our brewery and have more beer production which means taking over more the NH stores, and restaurants, and ultimately if it's all kept in that one location because our name and address is on the can, it's going to push people here to Nashua. It's going to push business to the rest of our businesses here in downtown and the rest of the surrounding area.

We do local collaborations on a regular basis with our friends at Martha's, and Odd Fellows, and the brand new one Tail Spinner. They just opened up and we all worked together for NH Craft Beer Week. We all created a beer with one another and released it all during that time. We collaborate with a lot of other local businesses too like Free Wheel Cycle which is right across the street from us out the back door, and Go Cycle who builds those electric bikes. Blue Wave Brazilian Jujitsu Studio was actually started by Officer Jimmy Quinlan here of Nashua. He and I collaborated together to make a beer and we put it out labeled Blue Wave to promote him and his business. He's been there for us on one or more occasion when we've had things going on and it's the least we could do for all that he does for us and our City. And also Gin Spirits, we've purchased barrels from them on a few occasions, create barrel aged beer, and sell that off.

We have a very devoted following and honestly people regularly whose grandparents, or whose parents, or who they themselves retired out of that building came inside, sat at my bar, and my partner's bar, looked at a picture somewhere around 1910 and said hey see that window right there the top left window where their office is, that's where I slept. That's my bunk. What kind of value is that, right? The people who put themselves on the line on a regular basis get to come in and the gentlemen there at the end on the left should know that as well as anybody being one of our former firefighters.

Last of all, this is my town. I was born here in Nashua. Before it was Southern NH Medical Center, it was Memorial and that's where I was born. I was raised for the first five years of my life on King Street. I then moved away to Peterborough from 5 to 20, but my best friend grew up on Monroe Street. I was here every spring, summer, winter, fall vacation. I even celebrated Christmas with them. I've seen this town go through a lot of changes - Simoneau Plaza, with Sharkey's, the Brandt Theater, and IGA, and all this other stuff which now you'd never realize that those were even a glimpse of the past but they're all still there and so is this building. This building is still here and it will be here and we want to be a part of it.

Beyond that, I think you've seen we bring a lot of value to this City and having us here, having us in that building, keeping the building running, and going I think brings it own level of awesomeness. 1870 – it's going to keep going, it's going to keep ticking. We pay taxes on that building. We took out the revolving loan fund so that way we could rebuild that entire bay that horses were drawn out of, and then turned into fire trucks, and then unfortunately turned into a junk depot because it was left to rot for a long period of time. As you all know, some of the people here had to deal with that for a long period of time as well as I did because I was told I was able to keep the doors open when we first moved in this location that connected the front bay with the Peacock Players. One of the biggest things after we signed on the line was oh they've got no what's it life policy because they don't have any sprinklers. So one of the biggest pieces of the puzzle for us to come here to have that gateway between the front and the back snipped in the blink of an eye. Oh what's the big deal, people can go around. Sure they can go around and they do but how much easier would it be if we worked with our friends up in Concord to make sure there was regulation between the front and the back for NH Liquor Commission and make sure this works out so that way when she does bring all these students and their parents forward that they have some place to eat in between shows. They have some place to have a beverage in between shows and we are family friendly. We do have games. It's always open. I have, when I started this place, a 10 year old child that I did not want to see put aside and he was always a part of it. He comes in and helps out now. He is 13 years old. He looks me in the eye. I have to look him in the eye to make sure I'm doing the right thing for this City, I'm doing the right thing for that building and the memory that goes on, as well as my partners who trusted me to do the right thing.

We have done a lot for our local non-profits. Coming up in a few weeks, Battle of the Batches Two. We pulled in people from the Fire Department. We pulled in people from the Police Department. They each made beer in my location. They're going head-to-head to raise money for Operation Warm and Nashua Pack. This is round two. Oh, Mr. Buxton how's it going buddy? We were just talking about Operation Warm and our little fun get together that we'll be having in a few weeks. One of my good friends is Christopher Ditullio, Sergeant. Well now he's Sergeant Detective of Nashua Police Department. He told us that the VFW went through a lot of trouble through COVID. They didn't get the funding that they needed to help the Veteran's. So we made a beer together and proceeds went back to the VFW. We've done things with Veteran's Count, an offshoot of Easter Seals. Again, another Veteran's organization. My dad is a Vet. Many of my uncles are Vets, many of my friends are Vets. It's the least we can do because they're the ones that were willing to take bullets for us when no one else could.

We also worked with Tom with the chili cook-off two years ago at this point I believe it was. You had asked us to make chili for your chili cook-off on the tree streets and I helped you out and we made some chili for it.

And lastly, we cleaned up this neighborhood. When I first walked up there with the former assistant James Vayo, there were three needles on the ground in that location. There are zero there today. I have a great relationship with the Police Department. They come there on their time off. They have parties there on their time off because how many changes we've made. They don't feel like it's across the street from what it's across the street from at 23 Temple Street. We've done what we have and we're just going to keep doing more and I hope you guys really think hard and do the right thing and make this building something that people come to for another 200 years. Thanks.

President Wilshire

Thank you. I noticed we had new people join us. Is there anyone else that would like to speak, come right up to the podium?

Amy McKay, Nashua Theater Guild

Good evening, my name is Amy McKay. I am here to represent the Nashua Theater Guild this evening. Just five seconds of my background. I come from tourism from St. Augustine, Florida. So I've seen a thriving arts community before. It reminds me very much of Portsmouth and that kind of area and I've heard that idea spoken of many times since I've been in Nashua about this very thriving arts community, a place that people come to downtown in the evenings, and as soon as I saw five years ago the Court Street Theater for the first time, I saw this really nice area or a potential for a very nice area. A little overgrown at the time but we got all that unweeded and as mentioned previously, very nicely cleaned up and so much potential and that's what I've seen in the last five years working for Nashua Theater Guild is the building continuing to grow, and the building getting more attention, and getting just better in general.

Moving towards your ideals and all of that beauty and all of that wonder all of these wonderful creative people that we have at Nashua Theater Guild. So all of our people are volunteers. We don't have people who are paid, so they come on their time off after work and they work in all of the different areas that you need for theater and for the non-theatrical people who like to work behind the scenes. They work in marketing. They work with all the people who we have who can make contacts for local businesses, and make deals for dinner and a show, and all those fun things that we do. Our organization has been here since the 1960's. So we are 62 years old this year and this is our home and it's very important to us. It's very different than Elm Street because we would be lost in that space. It's very different than many other spaces because it's very intimate. You get to walk right up just like you and I are right here and you get to look people in the eye and have this connection, and that intimacy, and those moments that are beautiful in a thrust stage. So it's very important to us to have something like that. We continue to talk about the beautification of the building, and move forward, and figure out fund raising, and anything else we need to do to continue to build our home and to better it. I think that's all I have for you, but I think it's the right thing to do. So thank you very much.

President Wilshire

Thank you. Is there anyone else that want's to speak of 14 Court Street? Well thank you all for being here tonight. We appreciate your input. Alderman O'Brien do you have a motion?

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN THAT THE MAY 10, 2022, SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN BE ADJOURNED, BY ROLL CALL

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

- Yea: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Sullivan, Alderman Klee, Alderman Moran, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Jette, Alderman Clemons, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Comeau, Alderman Dowd, Alderman Gouveia, Alderman Cathey, Alderman Thibeault, Alderman Wilshire 14
- Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was declared adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Attest: Susan Lovering, City Clerk