

CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION

BILL OF RIGHTS RESOLUTION

March 28, 2005, 6:30 p.m.

Municipal Complex

City Council Present: Mayor Sirrell, Assistant Mayor Grasso, Councilors Ferrini, Pantelakos, Marchand, Raynolds, Hynes, Whitehouse, and St. Laurent

Officials Present: City Manager Bohenko, City Attorney Sullivan, City Clerk Barnaby, Deputy City Clerk Kirby

I. Call to Order

Mayor Sirrell opened the work session at 6:40 p.m. and explained that Portsmouth Residents will speak first, then non-residents would be allowed to speak. She explained that each speaker would be allowed three minutes. Mayor Sirrell passed the introduction to City Attorney Sullivan.

City Attorney Sullivan explained that there is no vote during a work session and this work session was called for the public to voice their opinions regarding the proposed resolution and for the City Council to listen.

City Attorney Sullivan introduced US Attorney Colantuono as the first speaker.

II. Presentation – US Attorney Colantuono

US Attorney Colantuono spoke to the merits of the Patriot Act. He explained that the Patriot Act was passed in October 2001, six weeks after 9-11, but that many of the proposals were already pending and were brought forward due to 9-11. He explained that passing the resolution could threaten the relationship between the city, state and federal authorities. He further stated that Portsmouth is one of the primary potential targets for terrorism in the state.

City Attorney Sullivan read a letter from Police Chief Michael Magnant requesting that the Council cautiously and carefully review the resolution prior to making any decisions.

II. Public Input

Shaun Rafferty. Portsmouth – Mr. Rafferty spoke against the resolution stating that the council should not be making political decisions for the people of Portsmouth.

Robert Padian. Portsmouth – Mr. Padian was for the removal of the Patriot Act, but keeping some of the articles and amending them into the Bill of Rights.

Peter Bresciano. Portsmouth – Mr. Bresciano opposed the resolution and urged the Council to hold a public hearing.

Jim Splaine. Portsmouth – Mr. Splaine urged the Council to pass the resolution. He said the resolution is defending the Bill of Rights.

Donald Coker. Portsmouth – Mr. Coker defended the right of the people, but said this is an anti-Patriot Act Group and the Council is being asked to further the agenda of this leftist organization.

Paul McEachern. Portsmouth – Mr. McEachern spoke in favor of the resolution. He stated that the Patriot Act was passed without debate and parts allow the government to much power against the common man. He further stated that the currency of our government is fear. They want to keep us from raising our voices.

Peter Somssich. Portsmouth – Mr. Somssich spoke as a resident and as a representative of Amnesty International. He spoke of cases of mislabeling of domestic terrorism and that we are here to reaffirm the Bill of Rights.

Robin Willits. Portsmouth – Mr. Willits stated that the Patriot Act was passed without thought. The resolution is the way the people have to voice their view that the Patriot Act needs to be thoroughly reviewed.

JoAnn Paradis. Portsmouth – Ms. Paradis supports the resolution. She stated that there are good parts and bad parts and feels that the resolution should be passed.

Macy Morse. Portsmouth – Ms. Morse stated that we are here to reaffirm the Bill of Rights and we need to ensure that anything passed does not infringe on our Bill of Rights.

Lee Fairbanks. Portsmouth – Mr. Fairbanks expressed concern with the speed that the Patriot Act was passed and that it will infringe on the Bill of Rights and therefore is speaking for the resolution.

Anne McGee. Portsmouth – Ms. McGee spoke in favor of the resolution.

Nancy Brown. Portsmouth - Ms. Brown urged the Council to support the resolution and spoke of many cases of racism.

Doug Bogen. Portsmouth – Mr. Bogen is for the resolution and stated that although some people don't think raising this at the local level is appropriate, he states that many rights have been changed starting at the local level.

Judi Matthews. Portsmouth – Ms. Matthews supports the resolution and states that the Patriot Act takes away our civil liberties.

Melissa Bernardin. Portsmouth – Ms. Bernardin urged the City Council to pass the resolution.

Charles Vaughn. Portsmouth – Mr. Vaughn supports the resolution. He stated that people want to be protected and although the government tried to do that with the Patriot Act, the Act was drafted in haste.

Leah Caswell. Portsmouth – Ms. Caswell stated that we are motivated by fear and went on to say that the Bill of Rights has served us well.

Bob Vincent. Rye – Mr. Vincent read a letter he wrote to US Attorney Colantuono voicing his support of the resolution.

Tom Jackson. Small Business Owner in Portsmouth - Mr. Jackson spoke in favor of the resolution. He told a story of a Muslim family in Portsmouth who went on vacation two years ago and came home to find that their home was entered by police and government officials and their personal property confiscated. This property was never returned to the family.

Michele Cook. Small Business Owner in Portsmouth – Ms. Cook fears that we are becoming a dictatorship and just wants to reaffirm the Bill of Rights. She gave Mayor Sirrell 48 more signatures to the resolution.

Carol Porter. Durham - Ms. Porter told of having her rights violated by being evicted from President George W. Bush's talk on Social Security at Pease Airport last month for doing nothing, except wearing a T-shirt that said "turn your back on Bush".

Sue Mayer. Lee - Ms. Mayer was also forcefully removed from the Bush talk on Social Security for no reason. She urged the Council to pass the Bill of Rights resolution.

Burt Cohen. New Castle – Mr. Cohen explained that most of the provisions in the Patriot Act were around long before 9-11. He went on to state that our rights and liberties are under grave threat with the Patriot Act.

Jeff White. Milton - Mr. White stated that the Patriot Act is all about taking away our rights and giving corporate and government more power.

Cathy W. Wolff. Kittery – Ms. Wolff said there is nothing in the resolution that prevents police and government from working together.

Lisa Horwitz. Eliot – Ms. Horwitz stated that she was here to support the resolution.

Caleb Ewing. Hampton - Mr. Ewing explained that he was arrested by the Denver police in 2001 because he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. He stated that the humiliation and embarrassment this caused him was beyond words. The Patriot Act gives law enforcement the ability to do what was done to him in Denver. For this, he supports the resolution.

Claire Ebel. American Civil Liberties Union, Concord – Ms. Ebel talked in support of the resolution. She stated that the terrorists on 9-11 tried to destroy our Bill of Rights, but couldn't. Six weeks later the Patriot Act was adopted and has done more harm to our people than the terrorists. Ms. Ebel elaborated on various points where the Patriot Act is opposing our Bill of Rights.

III. Adjournment

At 8:55 p.m., Mayor Sirrell closed the meeting.

Respectfully submitted by:

Dianne M. Kirby, Deputy City Clerk