

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**AD HOC DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT STEERING COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, December 13, 2022**

**3:00 PM**

**Council Chambers,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Mayor George S. Hansel, Chair  
Councilor Randy Filiault  
Councilor Andrew Madison  
Dillon Benik  
Alec Doyle  
Mark Rebillard  
Brandie Wells (Left Early)  
Nathalie Houder

**Staff Present:**

Kürt Blomquist, Director of Public Works/  
ACM/Emergency Management Director  
Don Lussier, City Engineer  
Elizabeth Dragon, City Manager  
Med Kopczynski, Economic Development  
Director

**Members Not Present:**

Councilor Mitchell Greenwald  
Alex Faulkner  
Cheryl Belair  
Robert Patton-Spruill

**1) Call to Order – Welcome**

Mayor Hansel called the meeting to order at 3:02 PM.

**2) Minutes – Draft Minutes of November 15, 2022**

A motion by Councilor Madison to adopt the minutes of the November 15, 2022 meeting was duly seconded by Councilor Filiault and the motion carried unanimously.

**3) Communications**

Mr. Blomquist reported that a few communications were received by the City Clerk's office, which he forwarded to Stantec to be included in the survey data.

Mayor Hansel noted that this would not be the end of the public process and that there would be more than one public workshop with the whole City Council beginning in January. This Committee was charged with helping Stantec to work through these ideas, get information on traffic studies, and analyze the results over the last few months.

**4) Project Update – Stantec**

**A) Schedule Update**

Mayor Hansel welcomed Ed Roberge, Dave McNamara, and Bob Corning of Stantec. Mr. Roberge recalled that this is a major utility project. Last meeting, the Committee looked at key takeaways and discussed preliminary design alternatives for Main Street, Central Square northern expansion, multimodal transportation, and Gilbo Avenue/Railroad Street connections.

## **B) Preliminary Design Alternatives – Continued Discussion**

First, Mr. Roberge showed an existing perspective of Main Street, followed by images of the design alternatives: 1) minimal, 2.a.) multimodal with bike lanes in the two-lane road, 2.b.) multimodal with bike lanes along the sidewalk with a two-lane road, 2.c.) multimodal with bike lanes in the center median with a two-lane road, 3) single lane multimodal corridor. The Committee and general public expressed concern with keeping angled parking along Main Street and Central Square. The traffic analysis results showed levels of service and delays expected at each intersection. They looked at a five-leg intersection, with two lanes in each direction along Main Street. They also looked at a mini roundabout at the base of Central Square.

Mr. Roberge continued displaying a table of parking data, per the Committee's request, with information for Main Street northbound and southbound, and Central Square for the proposed signalized option and mini roundabout option. There would be parking impacts in either scenario. Mr. Roberge explained that in each parking section of the street, there are scales of parking utilization. High utilization is 92–100% and optimal utilization is 80–90%. He said that good turnover is more inviting than spaces that are 100% occupied all the time, which people do not bother trying. The optimal turnover range is between 80–85%. If taking spaces from those optimal areas, there would be concern.

Mr. Roberge compared the current parking spaces available to the proposed options:

- Multilane/Multimodal/Traffic Signal (two lanes in each direction)
  - Main Street northbound
    - Current: 67 standard spaces and 4 handicapped
    - Proposed: 71 standard spaces and 4 handicapped
      - From Dunbar Street to Eagle Court: increasing from 7 to 13 spaces (in an optimal utilization zone)
      - From Eagle Court to Cypress Street: increasing from 10 to 19 spaces (by reconfiguring an efficiently laid out parking bay with some crosswalk strategies; 92% current utilization that could benefit from increased parking)
      - From Cypress Street to Railroad Street: increasing from 4 to 8 standard spaces and maintaining 1 handicapped space (in a high utilization zone)
  - Main Street southbound
    - Current: 48 standard and 5 handicapped spaces
    - Proposed: 46 standard and 5 handicapped spaces

- The loss in spaces comes from the areas closest to West/Roxbury Streets, where there are curb cuts at two alleyways. These spaces currently have lower utilization at mid 60–mid 70%.
- Multilane/Multimodal/Mini Roundabout (two lanes in each direction)
  - Main Street northbound
    - Proposed:
      - From Dunbar Street to Eagle Court: increasing from 7 to 13 spaces
      - From Church Street to Roxbury Street: decreasing from 20 to 8 spaces
        - The roundabout is the controlling factor
  - Main Street southbound
    - Current: 48 standard and 5 handicapped
    - Proposed: 42 standard and 5 handicapped
      - All 6 spaces lost would be from the first block outbound of the roundabout, where it would be too crowded and dangerous for spaces to perform well there.

At Central Square with a traffic signal, there would be one parking space less than today. There would be a 15-space net difference with the mini roundabout option. With a northerly expansion of Central Square, there would be a net loss of three spaces.

Next, Mr. Roberge discussed sidewalk widths. He said that so much of downtown would be disturbed for the utility work and something needs to be put back in place, which he called a balancing act that the Committee had been contemplating. There were a lot of public comments about use and flexibility of the sidewalk space and how to expand widths. Mr. Corning showed the existing widths and those for each alternative configuration, section-by-section for both the signal and roundabout options (these sidewalk options include the bike lanes):

- Dunbar Street to Eagle Court:
  - Multilane: expands the sidewalk dimension by 13' on the east side
  - Single lane: expands the sidewalk dimension by 14' on the east side and 1' on the west side.
    - Note\* there are two existing lanes, each 11' wide. What is proposed in this option is a single 18' wide lane. There was concern for emergency vehicles passing or getting around cars backing out. With an 18' lane there is the same functional use as two lanes and bypass capability, and emergency response are not impeded.
- Emerald/Eagle to Commercial/Cypress:
  - Multilane: expands sidewalk 6' on the east side and 3.5' on the west side
  - Single lane: gains an additional 4' of sidewalk width
- Gilbo to West/Roxbury:
  - Multilane: expands 22' on the west side and 18' on the east side
  - Single lane: additional gain

Next, Mr. Corning explained the option for a five-leg signalized intersection at Central Square. Washington and Court Streets would remain two ways. He showed a programmatic diagram comparing the existing Central Square curb line to the possibility of an expanded Central Square with more green

space, a plaza space in front of the church, a wider northern sidewalk, a multiuse zone in the middle, and angled parking. He showed the same plan with the mini roundabout option. He also showed a section image of Central Square for scale and space. As existing, it is 150' long north–south, with a 54' roadway, and an existing sidewalk of +/-16'. Central Square operates well but there are safety concerns in accessing it and issues with its usability at times. The 54' of roadway is at the tightest point of the square. With the proposed conditions, they would maintain the existing statue, gazebo, water feature, and open space. However, they would add the 54' expanded zone that can serve to widen the existing sidewalk, provide outdoor dining, space for events like the Farmers Market and others, as well as space for a multimodal connection from Court to Washington Streets. The consultants think that by expanding the existing sidewalk, they could increase accessibility to the northern end of the Square.

Next, Mr. Corning discussed the proposed Gilbo Avenue/Railroad Street connection. The Committee expressed concern at the last meeting about how any changes to Gilbo Avenue would affect traffic circulation in the area. This notion of connecting the two areas came from some public comments to expand multi-use and usable space in the downtown. This proposal would change Gilbo Avenue to one-way westbound, where it would connect back into the existing circulation at St. James Street. Those driving east on Gilbo Avenue would turn right on Wilson Street and if going west on Gilbo you continue on Gilbo or left on Wilson Street. An additional concept is to connect the Gilbo Avenue and Railroad Street sides of the Street with a coplanar/level surface that could be used for vehicles and parking, but also be closed easily for events with a consistent plaza elevation. With this option, the angled parking in front of Lindy's would be maintained, parallel parking in front of the building on the north side of Gilbo would be maintained, and the five angled parking spaces on the south side of Gilbo the consultants suggest replacing with parallel parking. There would be no net loss to parking on Gilbo Avenue. Similarly on Railroad Street, it would remain one-way eastbound, maintain the existing parallel parking, and expand the plaza footprint east to gain more usable space, creating a multi-use zone on Main Street. The raised table intersection with transition slopes on either side would serve to connect the two plazas and provide a strong visual and physical connection to either side. Mr. Corning used photos to demonstrate how significant the expanded usable zone would be, including multimodal transportation.

Mr. Roberge concluded the presentation reminding that expanding Central Square would increase the usable space from approximately 17,000 square feet to approximately 31,400 square feet.

Ms. Wells noted that if Gilbo Avenue were converted to one-way for the portion proposed, it would be a long way back to Main Street. She asked if there was any discussion of changing the direction of St. James Street to make it easier. Mr. Blomquist said there had been discussion looking changes to internal circulation. There is potential to change St. James street to one-way northbound, toward West Street. He noted that at one time St. James Street was two ways but changed over time due to Sentinel activity. He said there was also discussion of impacts to Federal and Lamson Streets. Mr. Blomquist thought it was possible to adjust internal traffic patterns to make it feel like there is a shorter way back to West Street, though the impacts needed to be explored further, such as a potential loss of some parking.

### **C) Public Engagement Update**

Mayor Hansel welcomed public comments.

Toby Tousley of 500 Washington Street recognized that a lot of work went into these plans. He cited concern that it seemed there was a focus on making downtown a destination, when a lot of traffic already goes through the downtown, including himself daily. He said people who live on Court and Washington Streets do not have the luxury of bypassing Main Street. Mr. Tousley expressed serious concern about restricting Main Street to one-way for these reasons. Currently, people use Beaver Street and Eastern Avenue, for example, to avoid Main Street. Restricting Main Street to one-way would increase the traffic already present in these adjacent neighborhoods. He concluded that when this process occurred in the 1980s, there was discussion of closing Main Street, which he said was not possible without a north–south corridor.

Linda Rubin of 610 West Street said the work of Stantec and this Committee was phenomenal. She noted that her family had reduced to one car because of how bikeable and walkable this City is. However, she said that Main Street is not somewhere she would ride, despite being a savvy biker, because it is too dangerous. She served on the Bicycle/Pedestrian Path Advisory Committee (BPPAC) for many years and one thing they accomplished was the Complete Streets Resolution. This Resolution says that any time the City touches a road for maintenance, updating, etc., they must equally consider all users, including those walking, biking, using wheelchairs, and public transportation. She said they are wonderful guidelines. Ms. Rubin said Main Street is considered a slow street, meaning it should be traveling slower than it is now to increase safety dramatically for all users. She was very excited to see the proposed addition of bike lanes and the expanded Central Square, which she said would increase her use of downtown as a biker and walker. She concluded that it was most important for downtown to be incredibly safe. Ms. Rubin also asked if Stantec had considered having the parking spaces turned the other way to be backed into, which she said would improve safety for all users dramatically, despite potentially losing a few spaces.

Carl Allen of 101 Hastings Avenue spoke as the Chair of Church Council of the United Church of Christ. The Church Council sent a letter with their concerns to the Mayor and City Council. The Church Council reviewed all of the plans at their last meeting and did not comment on traffic issues but only those that would affect the façade of the Church. He thanked the City Manager and her senior Staff working on this for meeting with the Church Council. The Church’s position is that the church population’s opinions on this matter are as diverse as they are within the community. The main concern is the Church’s ability to maintain the historic façade—front of church and steeple. From time to time, they will need to bring in a crane or be able to erect scaffolding to maintain the Church. They hope any plan the City adopts would allow for heavy vehicles in front of the church; those vehicles carry approximately the same weight load as a fire truck. They also requested that no trees be planted directly in front of the church because when they grow large, they rub against and block the façade, which is a symbol of the City of Keene. He expressed gratitude for this Committee’s work.

Susan Hay of Middle Street said she and her husband moved downtown to be closer to it. When she heard Ms. Rubin’s comments about Main Street being designed as a slow street, Ms. Hay said it is not a slow street right now. She said there are trucks going up and down this street, which causes her to eat out less. She was most interested in the single lane option, which she thought would function to slow traffic. She lives on a street that could be impacted by slower traffic on Main Street, but the slow nature

of the street makes downtown more inviting to visit. She also agreed with multimodal transportation. She suggested making it a useful and welcoming place to everyone.

Cheryl Fairbanks of 69 Spring Street has been a property owner in Keene for more than 44 years. She recalled downtown being improved three times during that period. She was please to see that Keene recently made the list for one of the most beautiful cities; she did not want to see that destroyed. She asked that if the City has enough money to tear up the downtown, why then was Spring Street not plowed, sanded, or salted?

Ted McGreer of 115 Main Street said everyone was present because they love the downtown and are passionate about this for a lot of reasons. While the design work was complex and excellent, he said no one was talking about the damage of the dig for the utility work. He asked how everyone would feel about this beautiful City when there are no storefronts or restaurants. He said this is a three-year project, during which the downtown would be a dust pit. He said business had gone down 50% for one owner due to similar work on Winchester Street this year. Mr. McGreer understood and respected that downtown must be dug up for the utility work. He concluded saying dig it up, put it back, and let's move on.

Roger Wymarke of 51 Railroad Street said Keene is a cool place that could make this huge change, stating that most people would not know what will happen until it is complete. He said some people are scared because they do not know what will happen during construction. He cited that downtown had lost the YMCA, the middle school, and serval businesses for many reasons. He said many business owners do not know if they will survive the next year or two. He understood that deferring this project would mean increased construction costs. Still, he said he spoke for some other downtown business owners in suggesting putting this project off for one year, instead of in the winter or spring. Regarding a roundabout, he thought it was initially a silly idea, but there are safety issues currently at Central Square. He said the good thing about the roundabout at Marlboro/Winchester Streets is that traffic rolls through it a little faster. He said that by the time people are halfway down Main Street, they see the traffic signals ahead and increase their speed, so they do not get stopped. He cited many accidents and near misses of pedestrians. He suggested slowing the traffic with a single lane for safety and reclaiming the area as Central Square was used historically. He also supported expanding the Central Square for increased activities, which bring vitality to the City. This is an opportunity to gather as a community and transform the downtown. He concluded on downtown taxes, noting that as more people are attracted to move downtown the property values increase and therefore the taxes increase; however, he said they like those increased taxes because they mean the stores are more vibrant and there is more going on. If this works out, he thinks Keene would be better off financially.

Ken Kost of Ridgewood Avenue talked about Gilbo Avenue, stating that he always looked at it as a potential development in town. He wondered if the infrastructure proposed for Gilbo Avenue would support future development, whether store fronts, residential, or businesses. He hoped anything planned for Gilbo Avenue would be considered interim so that when a higher use development arrives, it would be possible.

Georgie Robinson of 164 Dickinson Road owns property on Emerald Street. She said she did not understand how the downtown was broken. She cited the Historic District. She was unsure why the downtown needed to be fixed when it is not broken, which would change the historic nature of the

downtown. She said that those who own property in the downtown know they are a part of the Historic District and are thus held to different standards than other parts of town. She asked why someone from the Historic District Commission was not a member of this Steering Committee. She mentioned the proposal to change Gilbo Avenue to one-way for a portion, stating that it would force people onto Emerald and other side streets, which she said are already problematic. She continued that losing even one parking space is not acceptable, stating that parking is the biggest issue in the downtown. She would rather see money go toward a design for a parking structure on the Gilbo Avenue parking lot. Ms. Robinson understood that safety was an issue but thought there were other ways to slow traffic. She said most everyone she spoke with did not know there was a downtown redesign occurring in addition to the utility project. She thought the messaging had been limited, as she only got the first mailer the prior week. Ms. Robinson concluded that bike lanes do not belong on Main Street and that walking to Main Street from bike stations one block away would be safer.

Jack Little of 597 West Street complimented the consultants and Committee for this work. He said he had been driving around Central Square for 75 years with no issues. He expressed concern for extending Central Square in front of the church, questioning how emergency vehicles would access those buildings. He suggested leaving Central Square the way it is, keeping Main Street as two lanes, and to focus on slowing everyone down.

Tad Lacey of Daniels Hill Road understood that this conversation needed to occur periodically. He was firmly in the camp of “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” He said it was important to him that Central Square had always been a place of discourse, where people can demonstrate with signs as people drive around the Square. He said that with the proposal to expand Central Square, this place of conversation would suddenly not be there in the same way, which he would not want to give up. He said that Central Square is already an events space and that events occur downtown all the time. He called it incorrect to say they were creating an events space. As a lifelong cyclist, Mr. Lacey said that bikes do not belong downtown, and he was not in favor of bike lanes after experiencing cities with them, because pedestrians could always cross into the bike traffic. He said that if bikers cannot blend with the traffic on Main Street, then they should walk their bikes on the sidewalk.

Alan Mendelson of 53 Knoll Avenue said that regardless of what the design is, the crosswalks need to be safer, with flashing lights. He cited some locations with good examples already in the City.

Drew Bryenton of 30 Nelson Street is the Chair of BPPAC. Currently, with two lanes of traffic downtown, he said it is unsafe to cross Main Street. He said a single lane in each direction would improve pedestrian safety, which he said the consultants showed would not impact the level of service or volume of traffic through the downtown. He said that bike lanes at sidewalk grade would dramatically improve safety for cyclists using the downtown. He recalled that the City is responsible for considering all modes of transportation and access for everyone in the future.

Adam Toepfer of 411 Winchester Street said he grew up on Court Street and has been walking downtown most of his life. He agreed with and respected that downtown Keene is one of the most beautiful in the world but said that did not mean it could not be improved for future generations. He said that some parts of the downtown are broken. He said that holding an event downtown at present is very expensive and throws off the traffic. He said these plans for a mini roundabout and expansion of Central Square would improve that immensely. There would no longer be a need to close the street for events.

Joselin Kimball of 104 West Street has lived there most of her life. She talked about bikes, stating that she did not think they were good in the downtown, citing Boston and NYC where cars are now overrun with bicycles. She said businesses there are going out of business. She said people want to get things from stores, but they cannot get in because there is no place to park. She liked having bikes come downtown, but not on Main Street, which she said moves too fast. On that note, she suggested speed tables on Main Street to slow traffic.

Kevin Dremmel of 257 Beaver Street understood the infrastructure project and need to change parts of downtown. He encouraged keeping Central Square as it is due to the historical significance as a landmark and feature that defines Keene. He was concerned the landmark would be changed in a way people would not like. He said the church at the head of the square is iconic and designed around how the streets work now. Mr. Dremmel imagined a way to keep Central Square the way it is and still meet the needs presented at the moment.

Connie Joyce of 81 Grant Street said she was disappointed when she received the postcard about the project because it had insufficient information, and she did not consider it outreach. She said this 46-page plan looked very expensive. She was very disappointed that the City would spend so much money on plans to try to look like Norwood, MA, or Boston, MA, and other examples of cities listed in the plan. She said Keene is a small City in NH with a population of approximately 23,000 people. Ms. Joyce said she had not seen a biker in days and in her opinion the heart of Keene does not need to be redesigned to accommodate a small population. She said the larger population needed to be addressed, nothing that Keene has a track record for short sightedness, questioning how many times Marlboro Street had been dug up in the last 10 years. She asked why there had been no maintenance in years for dangerous sidewalks like on Roxbury, Court, and South Lincoln Streets. She asked about the elderly, parents with strollers, handicapped people using canes, walkers, and wheelchairs; where will they have convenient parking? We need additional parking, benches for resting, and accessible restrooms. She asked why this project was trying to make Keene something it is not. Ms. Joyce suggested giving the taxpayers and elderly a break by stopping foolish spending. She concluded that a greater Police presence is needed downtown, which would make people slow down.

Vicky Morton of 275 Water Street asked, if changing the structure of Central Square and creating a mini roundabout with expanded open space in front of the church, whether weddings and funerals would then be relegated to the back door. Mayor Hansel said he did not think so but was unsure.

Paige Ordenoff of 41 Douglas Street said she did not have a problem with the downtown the way it is. She said she has no problems walking downtown, as well as biking downtown and finding a nearby place to lock her bike and walk the remaining distance to Main Street. However, she said she predominately drives to and through the downtown multiple times daily, and she is always looking for a parking spot. She asked for downtown to stay vibrant, with a lot of parking and businesses. She asked the planners to keep the downtown businesses in mind.

Wes Parrot of South Lincoln Street said that after the infrastructure work, Central Square should remain as it is because is part of the history of Keene and he would hate to see it change.

Anne Savastano of 75 Winter Street agreed with Mr. McGreer on how tearing-up downtown would impact businesses. She said that what is vibrant about downtown is businesses. She knows others who



come downtown to experience those small vibrant businesses. She noted that where she used to live, several businesses left town due to one year of construction on one part of their Main Street. Given the amount of money considered for this project, she said there were other ways to address these situations and handle parking and traffic. She suggested considering a parking garage where it would not be disruptive to a neighborhood so that people can walk more. She agreed that conflicts can arise between bikes, traffic, and pedestrians, and said there were enough bike routes parallel to Main Street where bikers can park and walk a short distance. She thinks Keene, the keyhole, and the Congregational Church are iconic. She concluded that removing car travel lanes would also be a major disservice to adjacent neighborhoods, which would bear the brunt of drivers trying to avoid Main Street. Where she lives on Winter Street sees three times the normal amount of traffic when Central Square is closed. Residents of adjacent streets see the same issues. She does not want to see this occasional traffic pattern become permanent.

Carter Tremblay of 11 Fox Avenue has lived in Keene for 32 years and he called it a great City to live and raise kids. He said the City had been very fortunate and largely isolated from vacant store fronts seen in other cities, until the last few years. He called this a testament to how healthy and vibrant the downtown is, which he said might be due partially to how it is laid out. He wondered whether there had been a risk assessment of the potential impacts on supply chains and labor pools two or three years from now. He noted how the Winchester Street project had already matured from a one-year project to two years, and said downtown could be the same.

Mark Christopherson of 28 River Street was a founding member of Pathways for Keene. He noted that River Street was once used as a bypass of Central Square before a stop sign was installed. He did not support Main Street as a single lane, both as a vehicle user and cyclist. He said that he would never ride his bike in Main Street traffic, whether it was one or two lanes. He did not think bike lanes were needed downtown, stating that bikes can park behind the downtown buildings and walk around.

Jim Hogancamp of 90 Felt Road said that over the years he had been involved with the ownership of 151 and 171 West Street. He recalled some year ago when the Sentinel featured the photo of a man in a wheelchair forced into the street because the sidewalks were not cleared of snow. He wondered whether all of these improvements would consider those in wheelchairs. He said he did not learn about this work until recently. He asked whether this Committee reached out to the Lions Club, the Rotary, or the Kiwanis Club. He asked why people had not heard about this project sooner. He has been in Keene since 1969 and sends out 1,000 newsletters on a regular basis and still, he did not learn of this until recently. He cited a friend who moved to Keene from NY, who listed all the great things about Keene that brought them here. As someone formerly involved with the Pumpkin Festival, Mr. Hottencamp said people would always comment that they kept coming back because of how great the downtown is. A group from NY tried to replicate the festival but said they could not because they could not duplicate the community support Keene has. He asked why we want to risk that.

Dan Skully has an architecture office in town but does not live in Keene. He said the most usable thing he heard in the proposals was the raised table transition between Gilbo Avenue and Railroad Street. He said the Gilbo Avenue plans would solve a lot of problems. He added that the raised intersection would calm traffic too. He said he would submit a more detailed letter in writing. He continued that a covered, designated event space on Gilbo Avenue would be more efficient than expanding Central Square; he

thinks Central Square should not be changed. He said they should look at the whole City and that the pressure this Committee faced should be dealt with on a larger scale in the community.

Jess Gelter of Arts Alive lives in Brattleboro, VT. She has worked in Keene for 10 years and her organization represents 160 artists and organizations in the community. She said she hears time and again that people want more space for outdoor art and the opportunity to use the arts to build community. She cited festivals and cultural events, such as the Pride Festival this year. She added that arts and cultural events are economic drivers for the downtown. Ms. Gelter said that the proposals for more festival space around Central Square and more flexible space around Gilbo Avenue are essential to the community she was present to speak for. She noted that the statewide Stay, Work, Play organization investigated what young professionals are looking for and love in communities. In the Monadnock region, she said most young professionals cite the arts, community connectedness through events, and creativity. She said there had been a lot of talk in the City about recruiting young professionals and she suggested designing downtown with them and their aspirations in mind, which she said would be an incredible asset to Keene's future growth.

Michelle Chalice of 25 Beech Street said she had missed part of this process. She cited a lot of work by the public to ensure their dreams for the community are known. She had not heard mention of the Climate Action Plan, permeable space, shade downtown, or downtown temperatures due to the amount of pavement she saw in these options. She wondered if during the process there had been/would be an analysis by Planning Staff to ensure the public's trust is kept and that what is proposed respects what has already been developed by the public for the downtown. She specifically cited all users, the Complete Streets Resolution, and the Climate Action Plan.

Rowland Russell of 77 High Street asked that the next time there is an opportunity for public engagement like this, that the Steering Committee represent a wider demographic of the community. He wanted to focus some of his comments on buying local and encouraging people to shop downtown more through this effort. He walks everywhere and he said improving safety is essential for all modes of transportation. He said he would bike if he could, but does not feel safe doing so downtown right now. He said that bikers buy too and need to be considered as part of the demographic that supports downtown businesses. He cited a University of NH Cooperative Extension analysis of downtown trails and commerce, which showed significant economic benefit to other towns in NH that have done this. He said other towns in NH have done studies that show the economic benefit of bringing more people downtown, no matter the mode of transportation. He said regardless of the design for downtown, getting people out of cars, off bikes, and into stores is the most important part. Mr. Russell was a member of the Walldogs executive committee, which planned for 21 months. He said that committee was told it would be impossible to change anything downtown, but it happened. He wants to see a plan that allows space for people to imagine what we cannot even know would bring people to the downtown.

A member of the public who did not provide his name said he is 31 years old. While walking to this meeting, he said that only Main Street was plowed and sanded, he said not even Eagle Court was, and he was very disappointed. He said there had been a lot of focus on changes to Main Street. He continued that he attended one of the consultant public listening sessions during this process, during which he said all the people that attended supported the plans that were presented today. He said there had been opportunities to complain about what people were complaining about at this meeting. He said he wants

to see more parking, with restaurants seating 90 people, the Colonial, and more. He said there needed to be more discussion of a parking garage, adding that people do not want to walk that far. He said downtown Keene had been a throughway and a destination, but moving forward we need to start thinking about it strictly as a destination. He thought keeping two lanes of traffic was a good idea, he liked the raised bike path at sidewalk level. People do not see bikes now because they are too scared to bike down Main Street. It could also open the potential for a bike rental option in town. He said the expansion of Central Square would add to its history. He asked how much it costs to close Central Square for an event and said there are more and more events. He challenged everyone to think about the City in 25 years. He said he would not want to deal with this again. He said Keene could be a destination or a throughway. He said there was too much focus on businesses and visitors, when there needed to be more thought about local access and use. He thought visitors appreciated downtown being more of a community space. He listed his suggestions: parking garage, green space, and expanded Central Square. He said that if Main Street were a destination, people would use faster routes to get around the City.

Former Mayor Kendall Lane of 5 Hastings Avenue called the downtown Keene's front yard. He said that first impressions are important when people come into this City. He said this area decides whether people want to live or do business here, and we should not forget that. He said the downtown of 50 years ago is very different than today, as will be the downtown 50 years from now. He cited people not wanting to change anything, but he said everything changes and we must adjust to that, with this opportunity to be forward thinking about the downtown and to make it attractive for people to come into the community. During his eight years as Mayor, countless people came up to him in awe of our downtown, and he hopes that continues for the next 50 years. Other cities in NH wish they had what we have. He said we need to maintain that and make the incremental changes needed to move forward. He thought the mini roundabout would solve many issues with the Central Square area, he was concerned about 18' lanes that might encourage people to go faster downtown, and he was concerned with safety and making downtown as pedestrian friendly as possible. He supported bike lanes downtown for safety. He said there were things to improve but to always keep in mind the goal, which is a downtown everyone can be proud of and utilize.

Fred Parsells of 11 McKinley Street began on the topic of downtown being pedestrian friendly and safety. Mr. Parsells said that due to his more than 27 years with the Keene Police Department, he recommended the raised crosswalks like those on Winchester Street. He said he submitted his concerns in writing to Mayor Hansel and Councilor Filiault. He was in favor of some proposed changes but not others. He especially recommended speed tables at the crosswalks coming into Central Square from Court and Washington Streets. He added that even the 25mph speed on Main Street can be too fast sometimes. He also suggested narrowing the roadway for speed control.

City Councilor Philip Jones of Ward Five said he would not voice his opinion until this matter was before the whole City Council. He wanted to thank the Committee for their transparency and for getting the word out about this public hearing. He reminded the public that this started as a utility project to fix infrastructure, which must occur, and now the City Council must decide if these extra things would occur as well. He said the funding for the utility work comes from many City funds in addition to Liberty Utilities, Eversource, and other companies with infrastructure below Main Street. Councilor Jones said the costs go up as more aesthetic changes are added. He called this an ascertainment process and said he looked forward to a summary from this Committee and presentations before City Council.

Dory Maston does not live in Keene but owns a lot of real estate here, and therefore she is in town daily, including nights and weekends. She said that downtown and Central Square are where the majority of her life is, with apartment rentals, business rentals, and as the owner of the Pour House. She said she heard everyone's points of view. She continued that the proposed plans for the downtown are her worst nightmare. She understood that there were necessities with the utility/infrastructure work. She said that since those plans began, changes were proposed to everything. While everyone had great ideas, she suggested that perhaps the original members of this Committee got carried away. Ms. Maston continued that all of these changes would fall on the taxpayers' shoulders. She said most of the public present lived in Keene for a long time, raised kids here, or owned businesses. She said this construction would fall on them. She urged the Committee to think about the potential costs of some of these proposed designs. She called these great ideas from a minority of the community. She said there needed to be more research before deciding who would pay for this and spending any money. She did not think the other downtown landlords knew the real truth of what was happening here. She said it all might look good now, but the City would regret it.

Katie Folt of 16 Edwards Street works downtown. He thought the downtown was a little broken and could be better. She understood the infrastructure work was necessary and said it would be painful. Still, he said the City might as well end up with something better after all that work. She appreciated that this would move some activity to Gilbo Avenue, and she supported the raised intersection. She addressed everyone who said bikes do not belong on Main Street, stating that this mindset is part of what is broken about the downtown. She hoped that Main Street remains as attractive; she wanted to see a future report on shade trees, benches, etc. She hoped the resulting downtown would be a destination where people can spend time.

Todd Horner of 127 Pearl Street is Vice Chair of BPPAC, which provided recommendations to the City Council on this project. He said the big picture message is that the final design does not have to be a zero-sum game, stating that there were plenty of opportunities for a win-win scenario. He did not think that cyclists should be pitted against motorists. With protected bike lanes downtown, Mr. Horner said more people will choose to ride their bikes downtown, spend money, and use the space. He added that bikes do not need a full parking spot, as he heard mentioned by other speakers. He said that more people biking would control the need for parking. Regarding the expansion of Central Square, Mr. Horner said the Stantec analysis showed that some of the design alternatives would improve vehicle flow through Central Square, especially with the mini roundabout. He called this an opportunity to improve efficiency and motorists' experiences, as well the experiences of those on foot and bike. He said there were many opportunities for everyone to benefit from some aspect of this project. He recalled that this is one of the widest Main Streets in the nation, which he thought meant there was sufficient space for vehicles, bikes, parking, and more. Mr. Horner said this was a once in a generation opportunity to reimagine what the downtown will look like for the next 50 years.

Bruce Bickford of Walpole was present representing the Farmers Market of Keene. He said the Farmers Market is a vendor-run organization and it is hard to keep up with plans like these. He was unsure whether the Farmers Market was considered in the proposed design alternatives. He recalled some years ago when six weeks before opening day the City did not have a designated space for the Market. Mr. Bickford did not want to see that happen again. He hoped for open lines of communication. He said

having a spot for the market year-to-year would be helpful and there was no permanent location designated at the moment. He did not see the Farmers Market in any of the plans.

Jim Huntly of 11 Marguerite Street recalled comments about the downtown City of Keene looking like a Hallmark card. He said that summarized his problem. Mr. Huntly said he was not against change and maintenance, but he thought the historic image of downtown Keene needed to be maintained because it is priceless. He said Keene is known for its Central Square image and he did not think it should be messed up.

John Michael DeMay of 10 Foster Street spoke about the downtown not being broke. He said Keene had done a wonderful job thus far of keeping the downtown beautiful. He thought about the egress from Central Square onto Court Street, and asked if all that should really be rerouted through small neighborhoods. He said the creation of Central Square, as it is now, developed based on how people used the Square historically, including vehicles. He said those arteries should remain open because only one place in Keene qualifies as downtown. If the Farmers Market moved to Central Square, he asked how the vendors would back their trucks up to it; the Farmers Market is six months of the year. He noted that there is a huge economic downturn, costs are up 50% in some sectors, and people are having a hard time covering their expenses. At this point in time, with stores in Keene closing, he said this project would increase the burden. He said the time for this is not now, while people are struggling. He added that the community must look after the community. He asked the Committee to consider that people cannot afford an additional burden and this would land on the taxpayers.

Michael Riggoli of Swanzey owns Fritz downtown. He said there were two things he did not hear mention of. He heard a lot about changing Central Square for events, but he said these events occur only on the weekends. While he benefits from special events and appreciates them, he did not believe in changing the downtown just for the weekends, when it must function well the rest of the week. Before mentioning a second concern, Mr. Riggoli said he moved to Keene eight years ago after experiencing the downtown for five minutes. He said this is a small New England town and this part of it should not be changed. He heard a lot of people talking about making Keene a destination and he said that he has lived in some of those “aspirational” towns in MA, which he had up to 40,000 more residents than Keene. He said Keene is already a destination with 60,000 people living within 20 miles, who come to Keene in cars. He said that if parking were reduced, people would not come downtown, and the businesses would suffer. He said the duration of construction would be bad enough, citing utility work on Gilbo Avenue that took a lot longer than planned. He said it was unclear how long this work would take, and he imagined it would be longer than anticipated. He did not recommend doing so. He said that 10 years from now, the downtown might need something totally different and who knows what that will cost. He said the downtown did not need to be changed in a major way right now when other things would probably force the issue in 10 years. As long as the plumbing and electricity is fixed, he said the remaining surface level changes should be quick. He concluded that this was not a good time to do everything at once.

Jeff Scott of Chesterfield called himself a part-time resident of Central Square, where he has demonstrated for various causes for the last 21 years. Mr. Scott was surprised when he heard about all these plans for major changes to Main Street. As someone who has stood on Central Square and watched the traffic and people walking all these years, he did not see the need for the major changes proposed.

He thought Main Street could be tweaked with some improvement but thought it was pretty good overall and should not change too much.

Ted Shabbot of 245 Church Street was concerned with the mini roundabout idea. His main concern was for pedestrians. He cited the roundabout at Winchester/Main Streets, where it is dangerous to cross. With a roundabout at Central Square, he asked how people would get around it, stating that lights would be needed.

Jean Amfarra of 59 School Street felt that some of the problems people were discussing were workable. She said this required creative thought to do all these things so everyone could be happy with the result. She said Main Street has been laid out the same way as the main road in this community since 1736. She said there had been many diverse changes to arrange Main Street since. She recalled that in 1988, former Mayor Russell appointed a 15-member committee to study how to best keep Main Street healthy and to improve it. Millions of private and public dollars were spent to beautify, widen sidewalks, add plantings, and rearrange parking. She said Keene has needed a parking garage for 20 years. She recalled that one was proposed for St. James Square and Gilbo Avenue, but those ideas never materialized, because she said there was always something else to do first. Ms. Amfarra grew-up in the Monadnock Region and said she loves NH. Keene is especially wonderful and is recognized as one of the most beautiful towns in New England; the town has won many such awards and was named an All-American city in 1964. In 2000, the first Heritage Commission was established to prevent sprawl and big box stores, and to protect the beauty of the community and Main Street, with progress such as the Sign Code and demolition review. In 2000, Keene was also chosen as one of the National Register's historic places in the United States, which prompted a call from the White House advisory commission on historic places. That award allowed for federal grants for many projects in the community. Ms. Amfarra was a member of the Heritage Commission and Chaired it for six years. She said this community was functioning beautifully the way it is laid out and she would hate to see that ruined, noting the church on the Square is featured everywhere, including the Police badges. She urged keeping Main Street and the beautiful history of the City intact.

Paul Bilgin of Court Street posed some questions to the Stantec consultants, stating that a number of things were unclear to him. He said it would be helpful to have a description of the extent of the Main Street demolition. Mayor Hansel said the underground utility work is extensive. Mr. Blomquist would make those plans available on the project website. Mr. Blomquist continued that the work would occur from building face to building face and impact services and utilities from all buildings. Mr. Blomquist stated that the downtown would essentially be gravel from Central Square to Water Street, though the work would be less south of Railroad Square. The utilities are all spread out under the street. The work would be fairly extensive. He said it would be a lot like Roxbury Street in summer 2021.

Maria Bradshaw of 51 Greenbriar Road was shocked because the mailed postcard about this project had links and a QR code that were not helpful; the meeting date was not included on the post card. She did not want to have to access many links and websites to get this information. When tearing-up Main Street, she urged thinking of the impacts to retailers downtown, who are already struggling. She thought this project would do some good and some bad. She said this Committee and the decision makers would need to weigh more heavily what could happen because this project is so expensive. She understood the needed infrastructure work, but said the rest of the proposed designs were over the top. She thought that

Keene was already a destination, that it is beautiful, and that people want to come here. She said the United Church of Christ is iconic. She requested more time and effort to review these proposals and to make them more available to the public. She requested more opportunities for public input. Ms. Bradshaw said the downtown should be safer for pedestrians, which might be accomplished with raised intersections and lighted crosswalks. She said some intervention was needed at crosswalks. She added that more parking is needed because she hears people say they did not stop at the store because there was nowhere to park, especially with an older population in town. She said that if people cannot access shops, then we all lose.

Mr. Hogancamp asked if the proposed parking spaces would be the same size. Mr. Blomquist replied that they would be the same width but deeper. Mayor Hansel said this initial process was about design features and functionality, before designing the project and figuring out how to fund it. This would occur in multiple phases. Mr. Blomquist said that 75% of the cost is for the underground infrastructure and the remaining costs are for what is replaced on top of the street...

City Councilor Gladys Johnson of Ward Four thanked the Committee for their work, stating that it was wonderful to see so much engagement.

#### 5) **Committee Discussion**

Mayor Hansel noted that this Committee worked hard over the past several months with the Stantec consultants. He wanted to see a recommendation to City Council that reflected that hard work and consideration of these alternatives. Personally, Mayor Hansel thought that replacing the Main Street exactly as it exists today would be unacceptable based on the fact that the consultants presented evidence showing that different traffic patterns should improve things around Central Square. On bike lanes, Mayor Hansel said that during his time serving the City as a Councilor and Mayor, he and City Staff heard constant support for multimodal transportation downtown in a way that minimizes loss of parking and considers safety. He added that wider sidewalks make sense in a lot of areas. He was hesitant to vote on these design alternatives but hoped the Committee could reach consensus.

Councilor Filiault noted that this Committee had difficulties reaching a quorum, stating that only seven of the 12 members were present at this meeting. Personally, Councilor Filiault suggested sending this to the City Council without a recommendation. He said this was really just the start of public engagement at the end of this Committee's process, and everyone has an opinion. He hoped to send this to City Council to create more opportunities for active public involvement. Councilor Filiault thought the turnout at this meeting would be small compared to future opportunities.

Mr. Doyle was not clear on the process. He said people he heard from who were against changing the downtown seem to be against it as a concept, but not against the specific proposals. Therefore, Mr. Doyle was in favor of smart improvements while the downtown is already torn-up. He said that going through this exercise and not resulting with an improved function and future use of downtown would be a wasted effort. He favored changes to something better in the long run for the City.

Ms. Houser agreed that this is a wonderful, once in a generation opportunity to make incremental changes that will affect future generations. Based on the information presented, she was unsure whether some of the public feedback and goals from the beginning of this project were still being met. She did

not recall reviewing those recently. She wanted to ensure that any future discussions tieback to the original objectives. She agreed that changes are possible. Ms. Houder supported raised crosswalks. While she wanted to absorb the comments from this meeting, she said that no matter the path forward, safety should be the first priority.

The City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon, said the great thing is that this process would occur again with more detail on a larger stage. When there is a project of this magnitude, a steering committee is appointed to work through the design options before the ideas reach the City Council. This Committee would make a recommendation to City Council, which could accept the recommendation or choose another option entirely. This process was to work through the questions that arose. For example, when the mini roundabout idea was first presented, they thought it would only work with a single lane Main Street. Now, the consultants had shown that Main Street could remain two lanes for most of the street with a mini roundabout option. This Committee and all its work helped to reach this stage of making a recommendation to City Council. After all this work, the City Manager hoped there would be a recommendation to City Council. She said that to go through all this work and not make a recommendation would be a missed opportunity, and she would feel bad for all the time individuals dedicated to this process. The City Manager sought big picture recommendations on whether to have bike lanes, whether to expand Central Square, whether to have a signal or mini roundabout at Central Square, whether to keep Main Street two lanes or reduce to one, and whether to change a part of Gilbo Avenue to one-way knowing that the turning movements would be worked out at a later time. There needed to be recommendations on these things before the project could move into the next phase. Mayor Hansel agreed that there should be some recommendation, with the clear caveat that this recommendation is in no way a binding decision or end of the public process, but rather a reflection of the Committee's work with the consultants. Mr. Blomquist noted that the Committee had not even touched on the final ideas of crosswalks. From a project perspective, he said the City Manager was correct that this Committee would provide guidance based on the broad information from the consultants that the Committee weighed. He asked where the project should be going in general on the topics that the City Manager mentioned. He thought this group should make a recommendation to the City Council.

The Committee continued determining if there was consensus on the various design alternatives. On Central Square, Mayor Hansel thought something needed to be done about the traffic pattern, given that the evidence showed it does not function well now and likely would not in the future as the City grows. Mayor Hansel favored the mini roundabout.

Councilor Filiault disagreed, stating that having been born and raised in Keene, the Square and Church's history should be considered seriously; changing Central Square was non-negotiable to him.

Mr. Rebillard said he met with someone at the Historical Society, who provided history and photos of how downtown had been used. He said Central Square actually began down by the Winchester/Marlboro Streets roundabout. He expressed gratitude that the Main Street was designed to be as wide as it is. He showed some historic photos. He recalled that at one point, people did not want trees in Central Square because they would have blocked the businesses signs. Mr. Rebillard favored change and had examples of how the downtown changed throughout history to look to. That was this Committee's task and he thought they should take this opportunity. He liked the idea of reducing traffic problems, with less queuing, though he said crossing the street near the mini roundabout could be challenging. Mr.



Rebillard also supported the northern expansion of Central Square, stating that the current Central Square in the middle of traffic had not been functional for 50 years. He recalled historic changes to the downtown, such as when a lot of trees were planted in 1985, and he wondered how many people opposed that change thinking it would change the character of the downtown. He heard a lot about the church and beauty of downtown, which Mr. Rebillard said would not change with these proposed alternatives. He said this was an opportunity for the Committee to think about how Central Square could be used more effectively; he stated that it would be a crime to leave it as is. He thought making these decisions might take more time than allotted to get buy-in. He recalled asking business owners what they thought, and many said it should be a whole community decision. He thought the Committee should spend more time looking back on this information and consider sharing that information with the Eagles, Kiwanis Club, Lions Club, and other stakeholders, as suggested by a member of the public. Mr. Rebillard thought that perhaps those discussions would illuminate greater input for making this recommendation.

Councilor Filiault thought that the Central Square traffic pattern worked well. He agreed that there could be more greenspace downtown and said that Gilbo Avenue is currently underutilized. He said to create more green space with the connection between Gilbo Avenue and Railroad Square instead. He said to leave Central Square alone. He agreed with one of the public speakers about protestors who use the Square, which he called a great part of our history. Mayor Hansel said a roundabout might get more traffic in front of the protestors. Councilor Filiault favored greenspace, just not at Central Square.

Mr. Benik thought a few comments from the public were very interesting and one was about those who lived in Keene their whole lives and raised their kids here; he wondered where those kids live now if not Keene. He said one gentleman spoke who was 31 and chose to live here. He said there needed to be consideration of bringing young professionals to town. He was speaking as a resident, member of BPPAC, and business owner. He did not think there should be fear of change. Mr. Benik said he understood issues with his generation, but said some of the things they are after are for the greater good. He said increasing multimodal transportation options would be important for the downtown. Mr. Benik said the more feet and wheels going downtown the better it would be for businesses. He supported expanding Central Square.

Councilor Madison also supported the expansion of Central Square north. As a scientist, he said the data and facts he heard from the consultants supported the mini roundabout as a solution for traffic woes at Central Square. He liked what Mr. Rebillard said about whether Keene will move with change or not. Councilor Madison is also a young professional in the community and is constantly involved in different focus groups asking why people stay in Keene and what they like about Keene. In response, he always hears about downtown, walkability, and bike-ability—that is multimodal transportation. Councilor Madison supported the mini roundabout and more multimodal options to have a less carbon filled downtown, which moves with the changes everyone wants to move in, versus opposing change just because.

Ms. Houder also supported the expansion of Central Square and the mini roundabout. She added that she was on this Committee representing Keene State College (KSC) and its more than 3,000 students, Staff, and faculty. She said this is an entire community extending down Main Street. She said the College cannot provide students with enough bikes, which students state that they use for medical visits, grocery

shopping, and getting to work. She said those are the future young professionals the community hopes will stay in Keene after they graduate. Those students are looking for multimodal options in addition to arts and events. Ms. Houser concluded that there is an entire audience of 3,800 people at the other end of Main Street who would support multimodal transportation, paths, and safety.

Councilor Filiault asked if there was a study of bicycle versus vehicle use in the downtown. Mr. Roberge said yes, that occurred in mid-July when KSC was not in session. At that time, approximately 10% of the traffic volume downtown was bikes. Ms. Houser said that these students use bikes to get to work, and the students therefore represent a large labor pool in the community.

Mr. Doyle said he agreed with most everything about the mini roundabout and expanding Central Square.

While not unanimous—with Councilor Filiault's opposition—Mayor Hansel heard consensus on expanding Central Square and a mini roundabout.

On the topic of including bike lanes downtown at sidewalk grade, Councilor Filiault was the only Committee member in opposition.

On changes to Gilbo Avenue, Councilor Filiault favored a raised intersection and connection to Railroad Square. Ms. Houser agreed that changes were needed in this area, but that more work was needed to determine how to best use and connect the spaces. Mr. Doyle agreed that this area is broken but was unsure how to fix it, stating that it is more complicated than Central Square. Still, he thought these early alternatives were vastly improved.

On whether to have Main Street as one or two lanes of vehicle traffic, there was consensus on maintaining two lanes of traffic, except where approaching the roundabout. However, Mr. Rebillard did express concerns for the number of parking spaces lost in this scenario.

The Economic Development Director, Med Kopczynski, is responsible for managing the parking program, which he said is not just on Main Street or for those coming downtown. He said there are a lot of different markets with more people living downtown, visitors, workers, and business owners. He said we tend to microfocus on Main Street and those visiting downtown businesses—there is a broader perspective. Mr. Kopczynski cited his involvement on the Technical Review Committee. He thought that once this Steering Committee recommends a path forward, he would continue work with the consultants and Mr. Blomquist to seek additional parking spaces in various locations. Mr. Kopczynski said he had ideas he was unwilling to share at this point, to not be pigeonholed. Still, in terms of the ultimate program, he said there were opportunities to add some spaces to the system, though maybe not in one particular location.

Mayor Hansel reinforced that establishing no net change in parking would ease a lot of the public's concerns. Mr. Blomquist agreed that there is hyperfocus on Main Street parking and as, for example, Gilbo Street is better connected to Main Street, it might make the Gilbo Avenue and Commercial Street lots feel more connected to the downtown. They have not looked heavily yet at opportunities on Railroad and Cypress Streets and Eagle Court. He said there are ways to find some additional spaces in a system of over 800.

Regarding one-way south on Gilbo Avenue, with the caveat that there needs to be exploration of ways to mitigate loss of parking, Mayor Hansel asked if there was consensus. Mr. Blomquist said most parking issues were not due to the road being one or two ways, but due to the mini roundabout, with the greatest impact to 15 spaces. Ms. Houder said the spots lost to the mini roundabout are underutilized at present because they interfere with traffic queued at the signal. Mr. Benik agreed that the queuing with a proposed five-leg signal would likely impede backing out of many present spaces on Main Street.

The majority of the Committee agreed with the mini roundabout, northern expansion of Central Square, including bike lanes, and raising the intersection to connect Gilbo Avenue/Railroad Square. Mayor Hansel said this was his recommendation based on the interactions with the consultants and data he had seen. He clarified that does not mean the decision is binding or that the City Council would accept this recommendation. Other factors could arise later in the process that could change this decision. This Committee was not choosing something for the community.

Mr. Blomquist said that provided the major direction needed to move forward, and met the charge of the Committee to consider what they heard and saw, and the public comments. He thought a lot of the public comments were on details that would be addressed in the next level of analysis.

Mayor Hansel thanked the consultants from Stantec for doing an excellent job and provided more details at each meeting. The City Manager agreed that Stantec and this Committee did a great job. Mr. Roberge said this Committee did an excellent job asking the right questions. As this moved to City Council, the City Manager said she would be ready to answer questions she heard at this meeting so that people can be comfortable with any decision the City Council makes.

Mayor Hansel discussed the next steps. Based on the amount of public interest, he believed a series of City Council public workshops would be needed to work through this similar process and broaden the opportunity for public input. This would likely be before the whole City Council in late January or early February 2023. He asked the Committee members to continue acting as ambassadors for engagement in this project by talking to their friends and neighbors.

Mr. Rebillard said he had a good conversation with the owner of The Works, who said the City of Concord had a truck drive around town with a display for people to vote on. He called Mr. Roberge about a similar idea to place kiosks about the project in various downtown businesses. He said he had seen these plans five or six times and still was unsure of all the details, and the public would likely feel the same. It would be great if people could interact with and vote with the data in front of them. He recalled a member of the public noting how hard it was to access this information online. Councilor Filiault suggested renting an empty storefront to engage the public, as was done for the Walldogs festival. Mayor Hansel said this was a good time for people to be engaging with the details.

Councilor Madison noted the upcoming Snow and Ice Festival on February 4, 2023, when downtown would be flooded with people. He suggested that would be a great opportunity to engage the public. Mr. Rebillard agreed, said he produces the Festival, and that they could use the storefront idea during the festival. Mr. Rebillard was also willing to work with Councilor Filiault to spread the word on the radio. Unless a store owner lets the City use their space for free, renting that space might need to be budgeted. Mayor Hansel said they could work through the City Manager's office. Mr. Blomquist said the displays could be produced if a store owner were interested in lending a part of their window space. He thought

part of the reason for using the web was because they thought it would be more accessible, but the recent feedback was helpful. The post cards developed because Staff were hearing that people did not know about the project. Mayor Hansel encouraged City Staff to continue experimenting with things and trying everything possible to engage the community. He did not want Staff discouraged by some negative feedback on the postcards.

Ms. Houder noted that KSC always has a packed house for basketball games and would be a good venue for sharing this information. Many of the attendees are residents.

Mr. Blomquist summarized that there was Committee consensus on expanding Central Square north, a mini roundabout at Central Square, two lanes for Main Street, multimodal facilities, and a raised intersection connecting Gilbo Avenue with Railroad Square, as well as exploring more traffic patterns for Gilbo Avenue.

Mayor Hansel thanked the Committee and public for their important feedback.

**6) Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mayor Hansel thanked the Committee members for all their work and adjourned the meeting at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker  
December 20, 2022

Reviewed and edited by,  
Kürt Blomquist, PE, Public Works Director/EMD